

POSTAL NEWS

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September 24, 2009 08:00 AM Eastern Daylight Time

1. Caspio Announces Enterprise Agreement with U.S. Postal Service

USPS Selects Caspio's Platform-as-a-Service for Cloud Applications

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Caspio, Inc. (www.caspio.com), provider of the leading do-it-yourself database platform for creating web applications, today announced an enterprise customer relationship with the United States Postal Service (R) (USPS (R)). The federal agency joins a long list of other notable government agencies, Fortune-500, education, and media organizations that utilize Caspio's platform-as-a-service (PaaS) cloud computing technology. For more information about Caspio, please visit www.caspio.com/enterprisecloud.

"The engagement with the U.S. Postal Service exemplifies that enterprises can leverage our mature application platform for significant efficiencies," said Frank Zamani, CEO of Caspio. "Utilizing Caspio's trusted cloud technology, marketing and IT departments enhance and automate business processes fast and at unbeatable ROI."

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.

Leveraging Caspio's proven "no-programming" approach to building database-driven web applications, tech-savvy business users and IT professionals improve time-to-market while simultaneously reducing IT costs and project backlogs. The platform incorporates a built-in database, point-and-click tools, and a highly scalable hosted infrastructure. It is also complemented by Caspio's world-class service, including free project consultations and instructor-led online training.

Caspio meets the highest standards of enterprise-grade reliability and security, powering over 150,000 web applications since 2001. Today Caspio's cloud platform

powers highly varied applications ranging from Customer Relationship Management (CRM), marketing automation, real estate, event management, customer support ticketing, business productivity, inventory fulfillment, feedback systems, and location-based applications just to name a few.

Contact Caspio for a demo at www.caspio.com/enterprisecloud/, or call 650-691-0900 extension 731.

About Caspio, Inc.

Caspio, Inc. (www.caspio.com) is the world's leading on-demand do-it-yourself web application creation platform. The company's philosophy is to empower business users to create and deploy web databases, forms, and applications easily and without programming. Caspio's platform-as-a-service replaces coding with intuitive point-and-click wizards, enabling users to rapidly produce web database components for capturing, publishing, and managing data online. Caspio shrinks development time from weeks to hours, and from thousands of dollars to a small monthly fee. Caspio's customers range from one-person entrepreneurs to Fortune-500 corporations, digital media giants, government agencies, and educational institutions.

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2. A \$4 billion bailout for the Postal Service?

By DAVID ROGERS | 9/24/09 5:08 AM EDT

The House voted Thursday to freeze Medicare Part B premiums for most elderly next year, even as Democrats moved to exempt the Postal Service from having to make \$4 billion in payments due next week to cover retirement health benefits for its employees.

The back-to-back actions reflect a flurry of last minute multi-billion-dollar fixes, often without warning, as the government approaches the new fiscal year beginning next Thursday, Oct. 1.

Democrats hope the Medicare premium freeze, which sailed through on a 406-18 vote, will defuse what would otherwise be an October surprise for health care reform — threatened cuts in Social Security checks for millions of elderly. In the case of the Postal Service, the action closely tracks a House bill approved Sept. 15 but would allow proponents to get past the Senate now without the threat of amendments.

At a meeting of House and Senate Appropriations Committee negotiators Thursday morning, the Postal Service language was incorporated into a stop-gap continuing resolution, or CR, that Congress must enact in the next week to keep the full government operations. As adopted, the postal agency, which now faces a liability of

\$5.4 billion due Sept. 30, would have to pay only \$1.4 billion and would be allowed to effectively defer the remaining \$4 billion until after 2017.

“That’s good news” said a Postal Service spokesman, who argued the arrangement posed no risk for the taxpayer since the retirement fund holds \$32 billion at this time. Nonetheless, critics argued the \$4 billion will now be added as a potential cost on the government’s books given the fragile state of the Postal Service, and the whole handling of the issue is seen by many as a parliamentary sleight-of-hand.

Republicans made no effort to target the postal provision but complained it had been added without warning to the otherwise non-controversial 30 day resolution. Moreover, to doubly protect their work product, the Democratic leadership for the Appropriations Committees has wrapped it into an otherwise non-controversial \$4.65 billion budget bill covering the operations of the Capitol and such agencies as the Library of Congress.

This legislative conference report can now be brought back to the House and Senate floor with special privileges that help avoid amendments.

House Appropriations Committee Chairman David Obey (D-Wis.) pointed to fact that Republicans had used a similar ploy with a CR three years ago when they were in power and insisted he had been upfront about the tactics in a public meeting.

Ranking Republican, Rep. Jerry Lewis of California, countered that the whole strategy was “one of the most cynical legislative maneuvers I’ve ever seen.” And Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-Ala.) said Democrats made matters worse by wrapping the spending provision into the legislative appropriations bill –taking care of Congress’s “backyard” and doing little for the rest of the nation.

On a 7-4 vote, House negotiators rejected an effort by Lewis to strike the proposed CR from the conference report on the legislative bill. But despite the cost, neither House nor Senate Republicans in the talks made any direct effort to target the Postal provision.

In truth, many had voted for the relief when a free-standing bill on the same issue passed the House 388-32 Sept. 15. And in the case of the Medicare fix, Republicans were more upset with the process than the policy.

“Democracy cannot work if we don’t let the people know why we’re making decisions, what the policy implications are not just to our senior citizens but to all our citizens,” said Texas Rep. Joe Barton, the ranking Republican on the House Energy and Commerce Committee. He said Democrats had treated himself and other

Republicans “cavalierly” and owed the country at least a hearing to explain what they had just done.

Without some intervention by Congress, Medicare is slated to announce next month increased Part B premiums, which are typically deducted from a retiree’s Social Security check to help pay for physician services. This would be a routine event but for an unusual combination of circumstances this year that could result in some seniors being asked to pay as much as 14 percent more than their current premiums.

For those impacted, that increase could mean a real cut in their Social Security checks next year, since retirees aren’t expected to get a cost-of-living increase in January given the drop in the consumer price index this year.

For Democrats, who hope to be on the House and Senate floors with health care legislation next month, this would be a political nightmare. And as evidenced by the final vote, Republicans also concluded that to do nothing would be inequitable to those elderly who face the largest increases.

All this happens against a background in which one of the biggest spending fights this week—over highway and transit investments—has been between Republicans themselves.

This was seen Wednesday when the House had to decide whether to back the bipartisan leadership of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which is battling both the Senate and the White House over writing a new, long-term reauthorization of road and transit programs.

Many in the House believe President Barack Obama’s administration should seize this opportunity to make long-term infrastructure investments to further stimulate the economy. But the White House and Senate prefer to put off this debate until after the 2010 elections, when there will be an opportunity to address the issue of new revenues to support such expenditures.

The bill Wednesday simply extended the current program for three months as this debate continues, but, playing to his political right, Minority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.) sought to derail the effort by denying proponents the two-thirds majority required under the procedures used.

Whip notices sent out argued that Republicans should hold firm until Democrats pledged that any long-term bill will not include an increased gasoline tax. But Cantor failed badly as his party split open — 86-85 for the bill which passed easily 335-85.

Most striking was the silence of Minority Leader John Boehner (R-Ohio). He voted with Cantor but earlier walked away without comment when a reporter asked if Republicans were opposing the bill.

Then again, Boehner had opposed the Postal Service relief earlier this month, while Cantor voted for it.

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3. Shifts ahead at suburban postal centers

George LeClaire | Staff Photographer

Published: 9/23/2009 12:01 AM

Processing outgoing mail in a Carol Stream distribution center rather than the Palatine center will affect 131 positions but not cut any of them, U.S. Postal Service managers said Tuesday night.

There are no plans to close the Palatine center, said Greg Johnson, senior plant manager for Northern Illinois. And while no employees would lose their jobs, there will be changes in duties, shifts and locations, arranged according to union contracts.

The move would save about \$10 million annually, the managers said.

One customer joined about 160 union leaders and employees in protesting that not enough information on the move was being released.

Patricia A. Ciston, first vice president and senior operations manager for JPMorgan Chase Card Services in Elgin, said she gets better service at Palatine than she previously got in Carol Stream.

Her office sends mail to 80 million customers and receives millions of pieces, Ciston said. If she needs to make changes, she would like to know when it would be.

Johnson said any changes are further down the road, but he could not say when.

Ciston also said she had learned of Tuesday night's meeting only when an employee read a notice on the Daily Herald Web site, but officials said large customers and local officials were notified.

Johnson said repeatedly it would not be appropriate to release details about the consolidation because nothing was finalized yet. A summary on usps.com said initial results support the move.

About 900 people work in Palatine and 1,100 in Carol Stream, he said.

Jackie Engelhart, president of Northwest Illinois Area Local of the American Postal Workers Union, complained that employees and unions are being kept in the dark about things that affect people's lives.

"I have been told I have a deer-in-the-headlights look," she said. "I don't know what's going on, and I attempt to find out what's going on."

Mary Corner, a mail processor in Palatine, asked why so much money had been invested in equipment and an addition in Palatine.

Robert Hart, district manager of customer services and sales for Northern Illinois, said when that decision was made, the economy was in much better shape.

Johnson said the 50,000-square-foot addition cost about \$11 million and will be used for something, but the use has not been finalized.

Delivery of mail to homes and businesses will not change, but city routes also are being consolidated, and that could affect delivery times, Hart said. Palatine postmarks will continue to be available.

The hours that business mail is accepted will change, the summary of the highlights said, and commercial mailers who presort mail will continue to receive discounts and drop ship mailings can be deposited at Palatine.

The postal service says the consolidation is necessary because the amount of business - especially first class mail - has decreased dramatically due to electronic communications and the recession, Hart said.

Large-volume customers also are doing much of their own processing and even some of the transportation, too, officials said.

Cuts have been made such as reducing the staff at regional headquarters by 15 percent and freezing some management salaries.

Comments must be postmarked by Oct. 7 and can be sent to Manager Consumer Affairs, Northern Illinois District, 500 E. Fullerton Ave., Carol Stream IL 60199-9631.

Postal: Delivery times may be affected by route consolidations

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4. United States Postal Service

September 22, 2009 - 4:52pm

Gone soon will be the days of trekking to your neighborhood Post Office for a single first-class stamp. In coming years, you will print that stamp directly from your computer or smart phone.

"Our goal is that . . . you will be able to turn your home, your office, your mobile device into a virtual Post Office," said Bob Bernstock, president of Mailing and Shipping Services for the U.S. Postal Service.

It's part of an effort to boost revenue and customer service. The Postal Service already offers many services on its Web site, including the ability to purchase stamp books and schedule package pickup, but the vision is to boost product offerings in order to become more competitive.

Part of that, said Bernstock, includes marketing to business, "working with industry to be able to drive the cost down in terms of getting samples of new products that manufacturers or retailers would want consumers to try, and getting them to consumers in a cost-effective way."

USPS faces stiff competition from private delivery companies, such as FedEx and UPS. And the Postal Service projects a \$7 billion shortfall for fiscal 2009, which ends Sept. 30.

For more on what your mail-delivery agency is planning, listen to the conversation linked above.

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