

POSTAL NEWS

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1. Postal Service Gets a Bright Idea for EVs

* By Tony Borroz Email Author
* March 8, 2010 |

The U.S. Postal Service has invited Bright Automotive to put an electric drivetrain in a standard-issue mail truck. Once the truck is ready to roll, the postal service will add it to its fleet for real-world testing in the Washington, DC area. The company joins the EV pioneers at AC Propulsion in developing prototype trucks for the postal service, which is considering ways to begin electrifying its fleet of 142,000 vehicles.

Although Bright unveiled its Idea plug-in hybrid delivery truck last year, postal brass want the Indiana company to electrify a Grumman LLV, or "Long Life Vehicle," typically used for mail delivery. The startup automaker says adapting its technology and bringing EVs to the world's largest civilian fleet will save the postal service big bucks.

"The adaptation of the electric drive system from our production vehicle uniquely distinguishes Bright Automotive's LLV conversion in terms of technology, durability and cost," CEO John E. Waters said in a statement. "In addition, our analysis and experience in vehicle electrification, vehicle ownership and financing, fleet maintenance, service, and infrastructure development, has shown that an electrified fleet will save the USPS millions of dollars annually, eliminate tons of emissions, and reduce dependence on oil."

Bright Automotive plans to deliver the truck to the postal service in July. It will hit the streets of DC for one year to evaluate its performance.

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2. Post office loses \$5,000 in hockey cards

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ST. JOHN'S, Newfoundland, March 8 (UPI) -- A package containing 50 hockey cards valued at \$5,000 disappeared in Canada's postal system and an official said "it's nowhere to be found."

Collector Joe Yetman told The (St. John's) Telegram he paid \$32 to send a registered and insured parcel from his home in Newfoundland to another collector in Ontario who had purchased the cards through eBay.

Yetman sent them Jan. 2 from a postal sub-station, insured for \$1,100. He said after 10 days the buyer told him they hadn't arrived.

Canada Post spokeswoman Genevieve Latour told the newspaper postal inspectors determined the bar-code had been collected for shipment, but disappeared from the system after that.

"We've done everything we could. It's nowhere to be found," Latour said.

Yetman was paid his \$1,100 insurance claim, she said.

Yetman's now offering a \$2,500 reward, hoping knowledgeable collectors will spot someone selling the cards of Toronto Maple Leafs and Montreal Canadiens hockey greats, the newspaper said.

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3. OrbitRemit makes it cheaper to send money abroad

By CLAIRE McENTEE - The Dominion Post

Last updated 05:00 08/03/2010

The global money-transfer business is a world away from selling property, but three Wellington real estate agents are making a go of it.

Their company, OrbitRemit, lets members in New Zealand, Australia and Britain transfer money to overseas bank accounts online for a flat fee – rather than a percentage of the transaction.

The business is an offshoot of Tommy's Real Estate, and counts Tommy's founders Tommy Heptinstall and David Platt among its directors.

OrbitRemit director Robbie Sampson – a former Tommy's real estate agent – says members can send money to New Zealand, Australia, Britain, the Philippines, Vietnam and, as of last month, to China.

The firm has signed a deal with China Post – China's official postal service with about 400 million account holders – that lets it transfer money to its 46,562 branches.

"They are big and the great thing about them is that they are spread throughout the country. And it's not just for transfers from Chinese to Chinese, you can send money to people travelling in China as well."

OrbitRemit is negotiating with a remittance partner in the Pacific Islands – which depend heavily on money transfers as a source of income – and hopes to be in three or

four "key" countries there by the middle of the year. "We see that as a critical market. We want to be able to offer a a very low-cost option into the Pacific."

It also plans to launch in South Africa, Sri Lanka, Singapore and Hong Kong in the next few months and has its sights on Zimbabwe. The company has made significant inroads in Britain, with its customer base there soon to outstrip that back home, and it is nurturing a relationship with Barclays Bank – which plans to help OrbitRemit launch in European countries where it has a presence.

Most transfers from New Zealand cost \$12 plus the exchange rate costs – which OrbitRemit keeps "competitive". People sending large amounts of money overseas can usually find special deals, he says.

"But we've got pretty good exchange rates for smaller amounts of money. If you're making regular payments long-term then the savings are quite good."

Transfers from Australia and Britain cost A\$10 (NZ\$13) and 5 (NZ\$11) to 7 respectively, plus the exchange rate fee.

The company charges a \$7.50 fee for transfers under \$300 to the Philippines from New Zealand.

Ad Feedback

"Filipinos are a very strong expat community," he says. "There's a huge number of them working in nursing who send a fairly significant proportion of their income home."

OrbitRemit's service has potential beyond money transfers to family and friends, Mr Sampson says.

The company will this month release a business-to-business payments service.

Kiwis living overseas who need to make student loan or child support payments to Inland Revenue can do that through OrbitRemit for free for the next 12 months.

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Collected by Chairul Anwar, Bandung, Indonesia.

E-mail address : chairulanwar49@operamail.com, uyungchairul@plasa.com.