

POSTAL NEWS

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1. Royal Mail plan to close Nine Elms mail centre, in Battersea, will put jobs at risk, union warns

7:20am Wednesday 6th October 2010

* By Ian Mason »

Hundreds of jobs could be axed and the postal service permanently plagued by delays due to “ridiculous” plans to close mail centres, a union has claimed.

Royal Mail has unveiled proposals to close two central London mail centres, including its hub in Nine Elms, as part of a £2bn investment and modernisation programme.

Its announcement rocked the Battersea-based site’s 1,150 employees, sparking fears that compulsory redundancies may be forced through should the move go ahead.

Greg Charles, London south west branch secretary for the Communication Workers Union (CWU), said staff were “devastated” by the news.

He said: “There’s just an air of uncertainty around. They really don’t know what’s going on - there’s been limited briefings.

“They are scared what the future holds for them.”

Mr Charles claimed Royal Mail’s closure proposals were introduced to enable the company to make a “fast buck” by selling the site.

He promised to “fight these ridiculous plans” and predicted closures such as this would lead to a decline in the standard of the postal service and result in delays for customers, with much of the work being relocated to centres outside the capital.

He said: “Closing mail centres in London will lead to a poorer service and will hit business and homes alike at a time when it can ill afford it.

“We will be aiming to build relationships with the community to get the message out that closing Nine Elms will have an impact on the service we provide for them.”

The CWU is calling for support from the borough’s MPs - and asking the public to let their feelings known to councillors and MPs.

A spokeswoman for Royal Mail said it was “too early to speculate on the future of any site”.

She said: “No final decisions have been made but it is recognised by both Royal Mail and the CWU that we have more mail centres than we need due to lower volumes of mail and a significant reduction is required. This affects London as elsewhere.

“We are continuing to consult with the unions about a proposal to close two central London mail centres in Nine Elms Lane and Twelve Trees Crescent, Bromley by Bow, and transfer work to Mount Pleasant and our outer London mail centres in Greenford, Feltham, Romford and Croydon.

“Royal Mail has an excellent track record of supporting people through changes and we are committed to continuing this. We expect to reach a final decision in the New Year.”

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Posted on Wed, Oct. 06, 2010 07:09 AM

2. Postea Acquires Systems Development Firm Cykor Systems

Postea Inc., a technology provider for the postal, mailing and logistics industry, announced that it has acquired Cykor Systems, a software solutions consultancy based in Oxford, UK.

Cykor Systems was founded in 2005 by industry specialist Mark Durbin to develop new technologies and services for the worldwide postal market. Cykor has been under contract with Postea since 2009 to provide an enterprise level architecture that supports Postea’s products.

Mark Durbin, founder of Cykor, said, "We're all very excited at Cykor Systems. This cements the long term relationship that we have had with Postea and its companies and

allows us to offer our expertise and experience to all of Postea's technology ventures going forward."

"Our acquisition of Cykor is in line with our priority to build a world-class team at Postea," said Elmar Toime, co-founder and chairman of the board of Postea. "We've been working with them for a number of years, and are excited to have them join us. Mark and his team bring both technical and industry experience that will help Postea build the next-generation of postal, courier and logistics products."

Cykor's Oxford, UK office will become Postea's European headquarters, and will function as the base for development and European sales.

About Postea Inc.

Postea was founded in 2007 as a technology provider for the postal, mailing and logistics industry. The company has brought together some of the most experienced and influential leaders to help create the next generation of postal technologies, services, support and financing. Postea invests in technologies and companies that enable operators to better compete in the deregulated postal market and its portfolio includes emerging and established companies – all of which are forward-thinking and innovative.

Posted on Wed, Oct. 06, 2010 07:09 AM

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3. 137th 'World Post Day' on Oct 9

Updated at: 2228 PST, Monday, October 04, 2010

ISLAMABAD: The 137th "World Post Day" will be celebrated in the world including Pakistan on October 9 with benefiting manners.

An official of ministry of Postal Services said that the ministry will hold a function at Postal Staff Collage, G-8/4 Islamabad to celebrate the World Post Day.

He said that Senior Postal Executives and heads of other departments will participate in the ceremony.

Federal Minister for Postal Service Israr Ullah Zehri will be the chief guest.

He said that the following activities would take places including presentation of Universal Postal Union (UPU) documentary, reading out message of D.G. UPU presentations, songs by a group school children, acting play of selected song containing the theme of UPU written by Additional Director General (Operational) Fazli Sattar Khan.

He said the ministry would also distribute aid packets among the flood affected postal employees in different parts of the country by representative from Turkish Embassy, Musical performance on Orchestra by Ustad Raees Ahmad Khan & group winding up speech by chief guest and also presentation of souvenirs to Turkish Ambassador and chief Guest by the chairman Abdul Hameed.

World Post Day is celebrated every year on October 9, to commemorate the anniversary of the establishment of UPU in 1874 in the Swiss Capital, Bern.

It was declared World Post Day by the UPU Congress held in Tokyo Japan in 1969. Since then, countries across the world use the occasion to introduce and promote new postal products and services.

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4. Postal Service Rewarding Resignations

October 4, 2010

Apparently, if you are a top Postal Service executive who wants a big raise, the way to get it is to resign. The strategy has worked for some, according to a report by the agency's inspector general.

Former Postal Service employees have been awarded more than 2,700 outside services contracts by the agency since 1991, according to the report. Between 2006 and 2009, 17 former executives were given no-bid contracts. Most of them received six-figure payments. One was given a \$260,000 contract to train his successor.

We wonder how many postal carriers are offered similar deals once they decide to retire and hand their routes over to new employees.

"It appears unethical to hire back former executives at nearly twice their former pay to advise new executives," the inspector general's report noted. Most taxpayers probably would view that as an understatement.

The option of resigning, then going back to the Postal Service as a contractor with much higher pay is only one perk agency executives enjoy. While the agency pays 79 percent of health benefit costs for most workers, top executives receive 100 percent.

Outside contracting is supposed to save money for government agencies - not be used as a gold mine for their senior executives. Apparently, someone forgot to tell Postal Service executives that.

Congress should not put up with it. Executives who approve such contracts should be kicked out of the Postal Service - with no possibility of coming back as highly paid contractors.

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5. 'Postal Service' e-mail delivers computer virus

By Chuck Biedka, VALLEY NEWS DISPATCH

Wednesday, October 6, 2010

Last updated: 6:36 am

Postal Service warning

To learn more about dangerous e-mail viruses, go to the Postal Inspector Web site and click on the scheme alert info. People can also telephone the Postal Service at 1-800-ASK-USPS.

About the writer

Chuck Biedka is a Valley News Dispatch staff writer and can be reached at 724-226-4711 or via e-mail.

E-mails claiming to be from the post office contain a virus, and computer experts from Carnegie Mellon University and others are trying to contain the bug.

The advice from a postal inspector is to not open the e-mail or its attachment, and don't forward it to the U.S. Postal Service, FBI or police to get them to investigate.

"We already know this is out there," said Postal Service Inspector Andrew Richards.

The e-mails have resurfaced in the Pittsburgh area this week.

The Postal Service doesn't send e-mails to customers, according to Richards. It normally contacts people through letters delivered in the mail, he said.

The bogus Postal Service e-mail tells people who read it that a package couldn't be delivered.

It asks them to click on the e-mail link to see the label.

Doing so opens an attachment, said Ed Schlesinger, chairman of CMU's Electrical and Computer Engineering Department.

The attachment launches malicious software known as a computer virus.

"The virus gets into their computer before they know it's a virus," he said.

The virus can track key strokes and give the intruder access to financial or other private information, he said.

"Don't open an e-mail that claims to be from the Postal Service," Richards said. "And if you open the e-mail by accident, make sure you don't open the attachment."

If you don't know the sender, don't open up an e-mail, Schlesinger said.

Richards said CMU and other universities are looking for a way to defeat the virus.

While it's unclear where the bug originated, the intent of the virus is to harm individual computers.

Postal Service spokesman Tad Kelley said the office is telling its employees and contractors to be careful about opening unsolicited e-mail.

"People should always be way of any e-mail and be careful what they open up. Unfortunately, this is not the first e-mail that purports to be from the Postal Service and it's not," he said.

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October 03, 2010

6. Sending a message to the Postal Service

Ed Lasky

The United States Postal Service has been on life support forever, losing money hand over foot every year.

Meanwhile, it has been eclipsed by the efficient service of privately-owned Federal express and UPS. Its government imposed monopoly on the delivery of first-class mail (as well as those taxpayer dollars) has helped keep it alive. The latest request for a boost in postal rates has been denied by the commission that monitors and controls rates. Similar to many governmental agencies, the payroll is bloated by high salaries and benefit packages that seem fixed in stone. Powerful unions and a vast labor force of voters have helped hold us hostage to their demands. But the practices that have helped to create this fiscal crisis are even worse than we thought.

The Boston Globe reports on other abuses that have been going on for years:

Dozens of former top executives and hundreds of former employees have returned to the agency in recent years as private contractors, sometimes making double the salaries they made as full-time workers, according to one of three watchdog audits.

The reports said the cash-strapped Postal Service is doing a poor job tracking its use of no-bid contracts, contributes more to worker health and life insurance benefits than other federal agencies, and should consider closing more of its regional offices to help address an expected \$230 billion, 10-year budget gap.

The Postal Service has awarded more than 2,700 contracts to former employees since 1991 and awarded 17 no-bid deals to former executives between 2006 and 2009, according to one of the audits. Most of those executives earned six-figure sums, the report said.

Further revelations: the service has been cooking the books to reclassify expenses in a way redolent of an attempt to cloud the issues that might cause controversy.

The message we should be sending: many people are billed via the internet, shop on-line so don't need catalogs, send emails instead of personal letters (what are those anyway), send E-greeting cards and not Hallmark ones (environmentally-friendly to boot), read magazines on-line, and use private services that are happy to come to your home or provide numerous drop-off locations to send your packages on their way.

Some solutions: drop Saturday delivery, privatize first class mail to inject competition and free enterprise, close Post Office locations (there is one in a monastery building near me - and one just a few blocks away), end the sweetheart deals noted by the Boston Globe, and curb the power of the unions that have a stranglehold over the delivery of mail.

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