

# POSTAL NEWS

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## 1. Answers Please

By BOB CONDON, [condon@poststar.com](mailto:condon@poststar.com) The Post-Star | Posted: Friday, November 26, 2010 9:22 am

Q: It looks like Glens Falls postal officials have hired people to follow around local carriers. This seems like a waste of money. Why is this happening?

- Eileen Ballard, Glens Falls

A: It's a "normal supervisory function," a U.S. Postal Service spokeswoman said.

The use of management personnel to review mail routes is an evaluation system agreed upon by the Postal Service and its employees union, the National Association of Letter Carriers, Postal Service spokeswoman Maureen Marion said.

The evaluation system requires management staff to do a full route walk at least once or twice a year "so that we can do any modification or adjustments to those routes together - management and labor," Marion said.

Route walks by supervisors "help identify seasonal or impromptu safety hazards that accrue, (which) could be anything from leaves in the fall, to ice in the winter, to dogs on the street," she said.

Managers also use route walks during the course of the year as a supervisory tool for new and current employees.

"Sometimes we go out short-term with some of our carriers to fine-tune their skills, and that's also important as we press for service," she said. "Supervision up close and personal in the Postal Service is not uncommon."

In addition to walking neighborhood mail routes, managers work with letter carriers behind the scenes in post offices to monitor "work load, work flow and how much

time they are going to need on the street," Marion said, adding that supervisors have similar interactions with window clerks.

Q: There are three gutted deer hanging from a tree in front of a house on a main road next to a school in the area. Everybody who goes to the school has to see it. My 14-year-old son is upset. Is this allowed?

- A mother in Fort Edward

A: Jeremy Hurst, a wildlife biologist with the state Department of Environmental Conservation, said he is not aware of any New York state rules or laws that would prohibit the displaying of dead deer.

Please e-mail questions on any subject matter to

answers@poststar.com, or mail them to Questions Column, The Post-Star, P.O. Box 2157, Glens Falls, NY 12801. Contributors should submit their names, towns of residence and phone numbers for verification.

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## **2. 97% of all postal credit offers studied by the CACQ do not conform to the requirements of the Consumer Protection Act**

Results of a pan-Canadian research project on postal credit offers

MONTREAL, Nov. 26, 2010 /CNW Telbec/ - Nearly all the credit offers reviewed do not respect the law in Quebec. This is what the "Postal Credit Offers: Between Dream & Reality" study completed by the "Coalition des associations de consommateurs du Québec" (CACQ) has revealed. The pan-Canadian study has analysed a total of 193 postal credit offers that were received by 30 Canadian consumers. Collection of the postal offers took place between June and December 2009. The final percentage breakdown per province was as follows: 33% from Quebec, 20% from Ontario, 17% from the Maritimes, 17 % from the Western provinces, and 13 % from British Columbia. The study focused on the legal and promotional aspects of the postal credit offers.

Barely acknowledged laws

In Canada, 67% of the offers studied do not conform to the requirements of the Cost of Borrowing Regulations taken from the Bank Act. According to Mrs. Clémence Gagnon, CACQ spokesperson, "if this rate of non-conformance appears important at first glance, the CACQ considers that the new federal regulations should be able to resolve the majority of the issues." Mrs. Gagnon also adds: "However, we are more concerned with conformance to the provincial regulations. While some provinces have enacted specific laws regarding credit solicitation, non-conformance is almost a

current practice." In Ontario, 71% of the offers analysed do not conform to Ontario laws. In Quebec, the rate of non-conformance with the Consumer Protection Act reaches 97%. In the opinion of the CACQ, those results are cause for concern given that those regulations are meant to offer some added protection to the consumers. "We were not expecting such overall negative results," Clémence Gagnon says. In Quebec, for example, 58% of offers do not conform because they incite the consumers to procure goods or services using credit, which is an illegal practice. "It's a shame since this is the only Quebec regulation that specifically focuses on preventing indebtedness," adds Mrs. Gagnon.

The CACQ is also concerned about other major problems, despite the presence of new federal regulations that came into effect since the completion of the study. One of those problems is the lack of sufficient regulations and the absence of monitoring activities and sanctions. "In order to make an informed decision, the consumer must have access to all the elements needed to understand the terms, the stakes, and his obligations. Only by putting laws into effect will the government be able to ensure consumers receive that minimal level of protection. However, even the strictest law will be to no avail if sanctions against non-conformance are not enforced," adds Mrs. Gagnon.

#### Aiming to ban postal credit solicitation

"The CACQ has been appealing to the government of Quebec to ban all forms of credit solicitation for 7 years now," Mrs. Gagnon points out. The results obtained from this study only serve to strengthen this pronouncement. "We must discuss this very seriously since the government of Quebec is now working on a bill meant to modernize the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act regarding credit," Mrs. Gagnon says. The CACQ reiterates its request to the government to ban postal credit solicitation. "It represents the most efficient form of law for the consumer, and the simplest and easiest one for the government to control," Mrs. Gagnon concludes.

To download the complete report of this study, "Postal Credit Offers: Between Dream & Reality," go to [www.cacq.ca](http://www.cacq.ca).

The CACQ received funding from Industry Canada's Contributions Program for Non-Profit Consumer and Voluntary Organizations. The CACQ also wishes to thank the "Office de la protection du consommateur" for its financial aid during this project. The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily represent those of Industry Canada, the government of Canada, the "Office de la Protection du Consommateur," or the government of Quebec.

The winner of the 2009 prize from the "Office de la protection du consommateur" for its credit and debt awareness campaign "Dans la marge jusqu'au cou!" The "Coalition des associations de consommateurs du Québec" (CACQ) represents a group of twenty-two consumer associations from across Quebec and aims to promote and defend consumer interests.

#### CACQ members

ACEF de la Péninsule, ACEF de l'Outaouais, ACEF de Québec, ACEF des Basses-Laurentides, ACEF des Bois-Francs, ACEF du Haut-St-Laurent, ACEF du Sud-Ouest de Montréal, ACEF, Rimouski-Neigette et Mitis, ACEF Rive-Sud de Montréal, APIC

Côte-Nord, CRIC de Port-Cartier, CIRCCO, Fonds Communautaire Des Chenaux, GRAPE, SAAB de Charlevoix-Est, Service budgétaire Lac-Saint-Jean-Est, SBC de Chicoutimi, SBC de Jonquière, SBP de La Baie/Bas Saguenay, SBP des Sources, SBP de Saint-Félicien, Solutions Budget Plus.

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Updated November, 26 2010 10:42:53

### **3. ASEAN postal officials talk unity**

DA NANG — The postal industry had undergone drastic changes and regional postmasters needed to work together more closely and share experiences in dealing with them, said the managing director of Pos Malaysia Berhad, Dato' Syed Faisal Albar.

Albar made the remark at the opening of the 17th ASEAN Postal Business Meeting and the 4th ASEAN Post++ Meeting, which he is chairing, in the central central city of Da Nang.

The meetings are gathering sectoral representatives from ASEAN member countries as well as dialogue partners from mainland China, Hong Kong, India, Japan and South Korea.

Participants discussed issues such as regional e-commerce development, postal savings projects and marketing strategies for express shipping services.

"Mobile phones and the internet have changed the way the public interacts with us," Albar said.

"Bills are paid over the internet and companies now opt to deliver bills in the form of e-statements. Now, more than ever, I believe we in the postal world need each other," he said. "There are many areas of co-operation among ASEAN postal organisations. We must continuously peruse other viable business alliances and collaborations."

Participants in the meetings yesterday signed an agreement on the development of an ASEAN international electronic money transfer system.

The ASEAN Postal Business Meeting was established in 1992 for regional postal operators to exchange information and experiences and strengthen collaboration for postal reforms and business development within the bloc. The ASEAN Post ++ Meeting began in 2007 to enhance postal service quality and business efficiency through the broader region.

The success of the 17th ASEAN Summit and other high-level meetings has been significant in driving the formation of the ASEAN Community and creating favourable conditions for postal enterprises to integrate and develop, said Viet Nam Posts and Telecommunications (VNPT) Group chairman Pham Long Tran. — VNS

#### **4. EDITORIAL: Let Postal Service adapt**

Updated: 11/26/2010 11:41:00 AM EST

While we're sorry for the few hundred people who will be inconvenienced by the pending closure of the Hellam post office, it's important to keep things in perspective.

Earlier this month, the U.S. Postal Service announced it had lost a staggering \$8.5 billion in the recently ended fiscal year, nearly twice the deficit it racked up the previous year.

And that's in spite of cutting more than 100,000 jobs.

With more people using e-mail and paying bills on-line, the recession taking its toll on advertising mail, and competition from shipping firms such as UPS and Federal Express, the Postal Service has to take drastic action.

Without it, the service's board of governors warned Congress, it could very well be broke by this time next year.

Although the Postal Service doesn't receive tax money, it still has to answer to Congress, which has shown little inclination to let the agency operate like a true business, one that's free to adapt to changing times.

While lawmakers allowed the Postal Service to close more than 160 post office branches, including Hellam's, the agency has been stonewalled or shot down on other cost-saving measures.

Nearly two years ago, Postmaster General John Potter asked Congress to lift the requirement that it deliver mail six days a week, citing a steep decline in the volume of mail it delivers.

He's still waiting for an answer.

Potter, who is set to retire early next month, also has asked Congress to lift a 2006 mandate that it pre-fund retirement benefits to the tune of \$5 billion a year, something he says no other large business or federal agency is required to do.

Lawmakers so far have refused to budge.

There are other changes the postal service would like to make, ones it says will put the 235-year-old agency on the path to solvency.

Unfortunately, most require Congress and bureaucrats to get out of the way.

Change can be difficult and inconvenient in the short term -- but if we want to save any semblance of this service we've taken for granted for so long, we have to accept that it's necessary.

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Going Postal: Mail Stickers As Street Art

## 5. Categories: Daily Picture Show

08:09 am

November 25, 2010

by Claire O'Neill

"I don't think the Postal Service has caught on to this," photographer Martha Cooper says over the phone. That is: Officials haven't caught on to the fact that street artists are stealing postage stickers by the dozens for graffiti and street art. In fact, it's not really even stealing because you can go to the USPS site right now and order up to 500 stickers for free.

Cooper's book, *Going Postal*, shows the many ways in which street artists have re-purposed those government materials, i.e., mailing stickers, for vandalism. In a sense, she says, "the government is supporting their art."

Credit: Martha Cooper/Mark Batty Publisher

Cooper, a longtime street photographer, has been photographing graffiti since the early '80s. "I honestly think that graffiti has changed the art world," she says. Take Shepard Fairey, for example. Some of his work, once considered vandalism, is now held by the National Portrait Gallery. And a new exhibition entirely about street art is in the works in Los Angeles, she says.

"For me," Cooper writes in the book's introduction, "looking for stickers is an on-going treasure hunt, increasing my pleasure as I walk around cities." She not only photographs the stickers, but also collects them. "I took two today," she says. Although the USPS may not appreciate the reference that the book title is making, sticker tagging is still, in some ways, free guerilla advertising for the struggling snail mail enterprise.

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