Mailers Hub News
The information source for commercial mailers
June 3, 2024

In this issue …

PRC Approves July Rate Increase on Market Dominant Products

To no-one's surprise, the Postal Regulatory Commission approved the Postal Service's April 9 request to raise prices on its market-dominant classes of mail.

In its May 30 decision, the PRC stated

> "The Commission concludes that the planned price adjustments are consistent with the regulations of 39 CFR part 3030 and applicable Commission directives and orders. The planned price adjustments are also consistent with the pricing requirements appearing in 39 USC § 3626 and do not implicate the pricing requirements appearing in 39 USC §§ 3627 and 3629. The Commission also concludes that the planned classification changes, with the revisions described in the body of this Order, are consistent with applicable law. The Commission's regulations state plainly that '[i]f the planned rate adjustments are found consistent with applicable law, they may take effect.' 39 CFR § 3030.126(c). …"

Legal, but …

Responding to the sentiments expressed by legislators and ratepayers, the PRC made an effort to persuade the Postal Service that what may be legal may not be prudent:

> "Although the price adjustments proposed in this proceeding are consistent with applicable law and the Commission has no legal basis to reject the proposed changes, the Commission is concerned, given the current state of affairs, that the Postal Service's proposal does not reflect reasoned consideration of the potential widespread effects of its proposal, is not prudent, and is not consistent with the best interests of all stakeholders. Specifically, the Commission remains concerned about the substantial declines in Market Dominant volumes, overall service performance for Market Dominant products, and the Postal Service's overall financial situation, issues that have all remained significant, if not worsened, since the current Market Dominant ratemaking system went into effect. The Commission has opened Docket No. RM2024-4 to consider whether the current ratemaking system is achieving the objectives of 39 USC § 3622(b), taking into account the factors of 39 USC § 3622(c). … While the review in Docket No. RM2024-4 is ongoing, the Commission reminds the Postal Service that it expects it 'to use its business judgment in utilizing the tools provided in the system of ratemaking to craft pricing schemes and specific prices' and encourages the Governors of the Postal Service to consider these issues and the issues raised by stakeholders when exercising their business judgment to determine the frequency and magnitude of future Market Dominant price adjustments. See Order No. 5763 at 270.
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> "The Commission strongly encourages the Governors to consider exercising their business judgment, consistent with statutory and regulatory requirements, not to increase rates by the full amount permitted by law. Participants in the docket presented a number of reasons why rate increases below the legal limit may be appropriate for business and public policy reasons. The Commission recommends that, in exercising their discretion, the Governors heed the concerns of stakeholders, particularly in light of the facts that: rate increases have occurred more frequently than occurred previously and than may have been expected by the mail market when the ratemaking system was modified in Docket No. RM2017-3; some of the effects from the most recent rate increases in January 2024 have yet to occur, let alone be understood; and service performance and efficiency have declined by historic levels, adding to the stress on the mail market. This combination of stressors may be unprecedented in the history of the Postal Service. In addition, as of March 2024, the Postal Service had liquidity of $16.150 billion, including cash, cash equivalents, short-term investments, and available borrowing authority."

Next

The remainder of the 108-page decision consisted of the commission's analyses of the proposed rates and responses to the arguments of commenters urging that the USPS request be rejected. After that was a 110-page attachment containing changes to the Domestic Mail Schedule and the new prices.

In conclusion, the Postal Service's proposed prices, as well as the discounts and incentives and the 2025 promotions, were approved as filed and will take effect on July 14. Those prices were shown in the rate charts attached to the April 22 issue of *Mailers Hub News*.

The upshot for those who were hoping for a different outcome is that the commission, likely on the advice of its lawyers, had insufficient reason to reject the filing; if they had, the USPS likely would have sued in federal court to reverse the decision. Essentially, the law only allows rejection of a ate filing for specific reasons, and those don't include the imprudent policies of the Postmaster General and his doormat Board of Governors. Back in 1970, and again in 2006, Congress didn't foresee a future Louis DeJoy hell-bent on a quixotic and self-defeating search for financial self-sufficiency through volume-destroying price increases.

Congressional Letter Comments on PRC Rulemaking

For someone who rejects outside involvement in how he conducts business, Postmaster General Louis DeJoy has, through his policies and attitudes, managed to attract the very kind of external oversight he dislikes.

Another letter

The latest example is a May 23 letter to the Postal Regulatory Commission from four members of the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability: Jamie Raskin (MD 8th), Raja Krishnamoorthi (IL 8th), Gerald Connolly (VA 11th), and Kweisi Mfume (MD 7th). In their letter, the representatives offered their "comments on the advance notice of proposed rulemaking on the statutory review of the system for regulating rates and classes for market dominant products," adding:

> "On Tuesday, April 9, 2024, the Postal Service filed notice of proposed price hikes pending approval by the Postal Regulatory Commission (the Commission). The proposal is to increase first-class Forever stamp prices from 68 cents to 73 cents. This marks the sixth time since March 2021 that the Postal Service has increased postage rates. This rate hike, if implemented, comes at a time when postal delivery performance and mail and package volumes are experiencing historic lows. We believe that this trajectory is setting the Postal Service on a course that threatens its future as an effective, efficient, and vital American institution.
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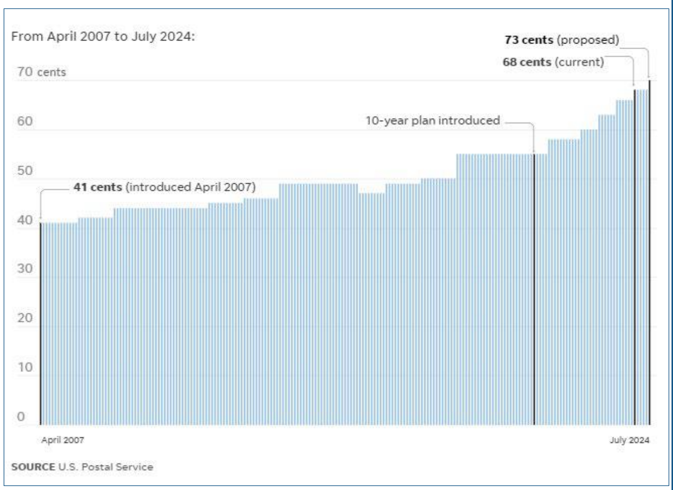
> "The graph below, developed from data supplied by the Postal Service, demonstrates the increasingly steep rise in first-class postage rates. In particular, we note that the increase becomes more severe following the start of Postmaster General DeJoy's ten-year 'Delivering for America' plan. The mail that most individuals are likely to send is currently meeting its performance standard 81% of the time. The Postal Service's own target is 92%.



> "The trend of increasing postal prices multiple times per year, along with the decline in postal delivery performance that followed the implementation of Delivering for America plan, are clearly at odds with the statutory objectives and factors for regulating the mail, as established in 39 USC. § 3622(b) and 39 USC § 3622(c), respectively.
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> "Among the statutory objectives are requirements to 'maintain high quality service standards' and 'establish and maintain a just and reasonable schedule for rates and classifications.' The statutory factors the Postal Service must consider include 'the effect of rate increases upon the general public, business mail users, and enterprises in the private sector of the economy engaged in the delivery of mail matter other than letters.'
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> "The Commission's research has shown that the Postal Service's performance has failed to meet its targets. In 2023, the Commission found that more than half of all market dominant products failed to meet their targets in fiscal year (FY) 2023. The Commission notes that it directed the Postal Service to 'take corrective action' to improve performance and that the Commission developed directives designed to 'elicit information and data from the Postal Service regarding service performance' and how the Postal Service plans to restore that service in FY 2024.
>
> "Additionally, the Postal Service's total mail volume has continued to decline steadily since Postmaster General DeJoy first took office in 2020. This decline includes volume losses in the First-Class Mail, the First-Class Single Piece Mail, and even the shipping and package categories. In 2020, total mail volume was at 129.17 billion units, but by 2023 that number fell to 116.15 billion units, resulting in a 10% drop in mail volume. Mail volume is directly correlated to the economic health of the Postal Service. We know this because, in the midst of these significant and continuous declines, the Postal Service reported a $6.5 billion net loss for FY 2023, and it is expected to see a similar loss for FY 2024. We are concerned with the extent to which the pace of these postage price changes may contribute to volume declines in excess of earlier projections on total mail volume.
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> "It is imperative that the Postal Service meet its service delivery standards, curb excessive mail volume declines, and prevent the Postal Service from entering unrecoverable financial peril, or else put at risk the livelihood of the millions of Americans who rely on the Postal Service for their medication, social security checks, mail-in ballots, and veterans' benefits. We request that you consider these issues seriously as you review the system for regulating rates and classes for market dominant products."

Observations

To Congress, it must be somewhat irritating that, despite having shed its management of the Post Office Department in 1970, it still is recurringly drawn into postal matters. Presumably, the 54-year-old Postal Service should have by now become capable of running the nation's postal system without needing attention from Congress. Of course, in fairness to all concerned, the America of 1970 isn't what America is in 2024, especially regarding how people shop, communicate, and use the post.

Nonetheless, legislators lately have become increasingly aware of the distress of ratepayers – because of Postmaster General Louis DeJoy's not-so-"judicious" pursuit of higher prices while failing to keep service levels anywhere near where they were under his often-derided predecessors.

Most executives who would be leaders of an enterprise the size and national significance as the Postal Service would long ago have understood the need for attention to his or her many constituencies, knowing that their support (or lack thereof) can impact both short- and long-term success.

DeJoy, however, seems intent on offending everyone, demonstrating an indifferently adversarial attitude that only *he* doesn't see as impeding achievement of whatever accomplishments he wants to leave as his legacy. Nonetheless, at this point, the level of legislators' interest in the Postal Service – notably its rates and service – should be a sign that the PMG needs to amend his approach. If he doesn't want "interference" from legislators (or the PRC or anyone else), he might want to get the message soon.

Another Letter to Sen. Peters Provides More Details

Apparently, if commercial mailers and other ratepayers want to know about the ongoing changes to the Postal Service's network, they have to wait for details to be presented in a letter to Congress.

"Clarifying"

As reported in the May 20 issue of *Mailers Hub News*, Postmaster General Louis DeJoy sent a May 9 letter to Sen. Gary Peters (MI), chair of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, in which DeJoy agreed to slow *some* network changes. However, claiming "confusion continues to proliferate in some circles about the work we have underway," DeJoy wrote another letter on May 20 "to clarify the various initiatives we have ongoing" as well as those "we agreed to 'pause' in my letter to you on May 9."

DeJoy's six-page letter contained the usual allegations about the network and facilities that were in place when he arrived in 2021, as well as the predictable praise for his Plan and the results it will deliver. He also clarified that, unlike past facility consolidations where all processing operations were moved elsewhere, the current "mail processing facility reviews" will result in relocation of only outgoing mail processing, not closure of the facility. He made it a point to note that "in some cases, the movement of these operations is freeing up space so that a Sorting and Delivery Center … can be co-located at the facility," hoping to soothe politicians' concerns about the loss of union jobs in their states.

Useful details

Though the letter had plenty of the usual PR-soaked DeJoy-speak, there was substantive content – not previously provided to the public – that listed the "ongoing activities we are endeavoring to accomplish during the remainder of the year," i.e., facilities that are or will be on-line soon.

Noting that "our plan currently provides for 60 locations," the letter listed thirteen regional processing and distribution centers now or soon to be open:

- **Richmond** (VA): an existing 680,000 square foot facility substantially complete and operating, awaiting further conveying equipment to be installed in first quarter of next year.
- **Atlanta** (Palmetto) (GA): a new 1,200,000 square foot facility substantially complete and substantially operating awaiting some additional equipment and facility adjustments.
- **Charlotte** (Gastonia) (NC)a new 700,000 square foot facility substantially completed and partially operating.
- **Chicago** (IL): an existing 720,000 square foot facility currently being substantially renovated and equipped and partially operating. Expected completion prior to year-end.
- **Portland** (OR): an existing 780,000 square foot facility substantially complete and operating, awaiting further material handling equipment to be installed prior to the end of the year.
- **Boise** (ID): an existing 300,000 square foot facility substantially complete and operating, awaiting further material handling equipment to be installed prior to the end of the year.
- **Houston** (TX): an existing 850,000 square foot facility currently being substantially renovated and equipped and partially operating.
- **Indianapolis** (IN): a new 1,200,000 square foot facility in various levels of completion by function awaiting additional equipment installation. Partially operating for package sortation with increasing functionality and volume through the end of 2024.
- **Jacksonville** (FL): an existing 780,000 square foot facility currently being substantially renovated and equipped. Partial operations to begin this fall. Expected completion prior to year-end.
- **Jersey City** (NJ): an existing 1,400,000 square foot facility currently being substantially renovated and equipped and partially operating for package sortation. Expected completion in September of 2025.
- **Greensboro** (NC): an existing 460,000 square foot facility currently being substantially renovated and equipped and partially operating. Expected completion in September of 2025.
- **Phoenix** (AZ): a new 500,000 square foot facility in various levels of completion by function awaiting additional equipment installation. Initial operations begin for package sortation in September 2024.
- **Santa Clarita** (CA): An existing 650,000 square foot facility receiving a 200,000 square foot addition scheduled for completion in 2026.

Adding that "our plan currently provides for approximately 190" local processing centers, the letter identified twenty that are now open or planned to be open soon:

- **Richmond** (VA): Configured and fully operating within the newly renovated Richmond RPDC.
- **Norfolk** (VA): an existing 200,000 square foot facility equipped and fully operating.
- **Portland** (OR): Configured and fully operating within the newly renovated Portland RPDC.
- **Medford** (OR): an existing 100,000 square foot facility currently being renovated and equipped and is substantially operating.
- **Eugene** (OR): an existing 150,000 square foot facility currently being renovated and equipped and is substantially operating.
- **Duluth** (GA): an existing 600,000 square foot facility currently being substantially renovated and equipped and is partially operating.
- **Atlanta** (GA): an existing 400,000 square foot facility currently being substantially renovated and equipped and is partially operating.
- **Macon** (GA): an existing 100,000 square foot facility currently operating.
- **Augusta** (GA): an existing 100,000 square foot facility currently operating.
- **Boise** (ID): An existing facility, configured and fully operating within the newly renovated Boise RPDC.
- **Pocatello** (ID): an existing 50,000 square foot facility fully operating.
- **South Houston** (TX): a new 400,000 square foot facility under construction substantially completed and equipped and partially operating.
- **Beaumont** (TX): An existing 150,000 square foot facility currently being renovated and equipped.
- **Charlotte** (NC): an existing 400,000 square foot facility under total renovation with significant equipment additions and currently not operating. Operations will be relocated back to the facility prior to the end of this year.
- **Johnson City** (TN): a new 100,000 square foot facility under renovation and being equipped. Operations to commence in 2025.

- **Greenville** (SC): an existing 250,000 square foot facility to be renovated and equipped in 2025.
- **Jacksonville** (FL): An existing 300,000 square foot facility currently being renovated and equipped.
- **Tallahassee** (FL): An existing 150,000 square foot facility currently being renovated and equipped.
- **Indianapolis** (IN): An existing 400,000 square foot facility to be equipped for 2025 commencement.
- **Fort Wayne** (IN): An existing 100,000 square foot facility to be equipped for 2025 commencement.

Adding further clarification, DeJoy stated that "nearly all these RPDC and LPC facilities for which we are not pausing implementation are existing and operating. The work we are engaging in with these initiatives is to catch up on 20 years of deferred maintenance, upgrade 30-year-old technology, install modern sortation equipment and rearrange our production floor layout to logically accommodate the difference between the size of a letter and the size of a package."

Lastly, the letter stated that "to date, we have deployed 55 S&DCs and will deploy an additional 28 prior to September 30, 2024, at the following locations": Boston (MA), Ft. Lauderdale (FL); Hicksville (NY); Kalamazoo (MI); Lakeland (FL); New Brunswick (NJ); Newark (NJ); Orange (CA): Phoenix/Rio Salado (AZ); Saint Petersburg (FL); Southern Maryland (MD); Springfield (MA); Stockton Airport (CA); Acworth (GA); Carbondale (IL); Columbus/Oakland Park (OH); Dayton (OH); High Point (NC); La Crosse (WI); Lake Charles (LA); Olympia (WA); Sarasota (FL); Severna Park (MD); Shawnee Mission (KS); Southern Connecticut (CT); Vineland (NJ); Wilkes Barre (PA); and York/East (PA).

DeJoy also provided information about other facilities not mentioned in previous publicity:

> "… Over the next several months we will be re-routing all our air traffic (approximately 150 flights a day) to 61 different airport hubs across the nation. Concurrently as we make this transition, we will be continuing to insource many of our over 70 Terminal Handling Centers into our regional centers to reduce handling time and cost. This is a continuation of our efforts to reduce air traffic and integrate mail and package movement with our ground transportation network. …"

Not surprisingly, DeJoy also had to mention trucks, and take another swipe at his predecessors at the same time:

> "The Postal Service runs approximated 50,000 truck transport trips a day. Because of the nature of our public service mission and the poor design of our network, we had averaged less than 40% trailer utilization significantly driving up our costs. We will continue to design and implement better routings for both national and local transportation to support our efforts to be more efficient and reliable. We expect these initiatives to continue through August, at which point we will begin to pause to accommodate the demands of the elections and peak season. This effort involves ongoing schedule adjustments, routing changes, cross docking, and trip elimination."

In closing, DeJoy had to again remind his audience how his Plan is correcting the mess he alleges he inherited, and that only enabling its quick and unimpeded implementation can save the Postal Service from operational and financial ruin.

> "As you have witnessed, over the past ten years, and prior to the issuance of the Delivering for America Plan, the Postal Service endured close to $100 billion in financial losses and was well on its way to lose over an additional $160 billion over the next 10 years. This has led to deferred maintenance more than $20 billion and an ill equipped, operationally ineffective, and devastated infrastructure with poor operating strategy and discipline. Our facilities are often unpleasant places to work, our vehicles are ancient, and we are ill equipped in most of our operations to efficiently engage in our work. As laid out in the Delivering for America Plan, we are working to change all of this to achieve long-term financial viability. The nearly $15.3 billion of committed self-funded investments is a key building block of our efforts.
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> "I have not disputed that we had difficulty in the initial implementation of some of the changes we are making and are working hard to correct for them and will do so. However, simply put, we are digging out of one of the biggest financial and operating institutional holes ever dug and the demanding pace of this change is required because it should have begun many years ago. We have a few years to correct our trajectory, or we will run out of cash and require a federal bailout or some other more drastic solution. I look forward to working with Congress to avoid more draconian results, and to restoring the Postal Service to a high performing and financially healthy organization."

Observations

Aside from why – other than DeJoy's adversarial attitude – this very simple listing of facility work was never previously disclosed, it's notable that two of the facilities that have caused negative publicity for the Postal Service seem to have been placed in service before they were fully equipped.

The Richmond RPDC, which opened last July, and which has yet to regain the service performance it had earlier, still isn't fully equipped. In his letter, DeJoy describes it as "substantially complete and operating" but "awaiting further conveying equipment to be installed in first quarter of next year."

Similarly, the Atlanta RPDC – where service performance plunged upon its opening – was described as "substantially complete and substantially operating awaiting some additional equipment and facility adjustments." Two associated LPCs, in Atlanta and Duluth, whose work was fully offloaded to the "substantially complete" RPDC last February, remain only "partially operating" while under renovation. From those cursory statements, it would appear that the conclusions of many observers was correct – that the Palmetto facility was opened, and all the mail processing from its associated P&DCs was transferred, before it was fully ready.

Though service performance for the Portland and Charlotte RPDCs has largely returned to pre-implementation levels, it's clear that, even for those "substantially" complete facilities, additional equipment has yet to be installed and/or associated LPCs are still awaiting additional equipment in order to be fully complete.

As for the other listed RPDCs and LPCs, it would appear from the brief descriptions that those, too, are being activated before necessary equipment is installed. In turn, this tends to support observations that, under mandates from the PMG, activations and processing relocations are occurring before necessary equipment has been installed and tested – and, likely, before staffing is trained and in place and local transportation needs have been assured and implemented.

Though DeJoy likes to claim only he has a Plan, no Plan can succeed if its execution is rushed before everything is in place and ready. Even for DeJoy, "shoot, ready, aim" isn't an implementation process that will deliver intended results.

The Impact of Transportation Changes – *Analysis*

It's well known that Postmaster General Louis DeJoy emphasizes what he considers "efficient" transportation – commonly translated as full trucks and fewer trips. Therefore, it's not unreasonable to conclude that his underlings in the logistics function have been diligently seeking ways to ensure transportation is as "efficient" as possible.

One way has been by eliminating the evening collection run to processing centers from post offices that have been determined to not develop sufficient volume over the business day. Initially called Optimized Collections, the program's name has changed but the result is the same: the day's retail and collection mail sits overnight if not over a weekend.

Another way to be more "efficient" is to route trips through intermediate stops where more volume can be added or where cross-dock operations can move mail among trucks so they're as "full" as possible. Yet another tactic – one that industry observers have suspected but that the USPS will never acknowledge – is that trips are held at origin or at an intermediate stop so that the truck can be filled with more mail.

A more recent, generally publicized, initiative has been to divert mail once transported by air onto ground transportation. Allegedly, cost concerns aside, air transportation was prone to delays and less reliable, a challenge apparently not affecting trucks on highways.

The groundwork for these tactics was laid when the Postal Service reduced its service standards for First-Class Mail and some Periodicals, arguing those in place were "unattainable." Adding an extra day, presumably, would allow achievement of the prescribed service targets; that it also allowed the movement of mail to be slowed was a benefit that was obvious but not featured.

The easily observable consequence of these actions is reduced service, whether against a target score or the "days to deliver" figure the USPS began to use a few years ago to trumpet its service performance – until that number kept moving up, not down, and the boasting ended.

Number, numbers

The chart on the next page is divided into five sections.

The first has data for service between city pairs that are a little over an hour apart by air, but eight to nine hours apart by road. The second, third, and fourth sections are for trips from a city with both a postal processing center and a nearby airline hub. In each case, travel is about an hour by air but from four to six hours – or more – by road. Whether mail ever moved by air on any of these lanes isn't known, but all are now ground transportation.

The final section shows lanes where the Postal Service is proposing to change from air to highway transportation. Most are between cities that average about 1,300 miles apart, with air travel taking over three hours. By road, the average distance between the same pairs is over 1,500 miles, with driving times well over twelve hours; some are more than thirty hours apart by road.

In all sections, the pairs were chosen to represent processing centers from different districts; postal geography can make a fair representation difficult. The USPS reports service performance only between districts, regardless of their geographic dimensions and how many and where processing facilities are located within them. As a result, the service score (and "days to deliver") from Vancouver (WA) to Portland (OR) – eight miles away across the Columbia River bridge – is the same as it is to Glendive (MT) – 860 miles and over fifteen hours east – because both Portland and Glendive are in the same district.

The air and highway distances and the highway travel times were determined using the Distance Calculator (https://distancecalculator.globefeed.com/US_Distance_Calculator.asp). The highway travel time assumes continuous movement, i.e., without rest stops or other pauses. The air travel time was estimated using an airspeed averaging 400 miles per hour over the respective distance.

Neither case includes an estimate of time spent loading or unloading as those can vary widely. Similarly, neither estimated time includes potential delays. The USPS criticizes air transportation for delays caused by airport congestion, weather, crew unavailability, or simply running late, but highway transportation is subject to its own delays from weather, traffic congestion, construction, vehicle breakdowns, and driver service time limits.

In most cases, of course, even after a delay, an airplane can still get to a destination faster than a truck.

Service

The city pairs shown were chosen for the reasons explained above, neither to illustrate an argument for or against either mode of mail transportation nor to skew service scores. The service scores and "days to deliver" were from the USPS service performance website (https://about.usps.com/what/performance/service-performance/external-service-measurement.htm) and obtained only *after* the city pairs were chosen and the distances and travel times calculated.

Similarly, the time period was not chosen to bias the results; the week of May 4 was the latest for which data was available and includes data for the same period the previous year (the week of May 6, 2023).

The figures speak for themselves. In the chart on the next page, a number for FY 2024 is in red when it is worse than the corresponding figure for FY 2023, i.e., the score is lower or the "days to deliver" figure is higher. The column averages for each section are shown below; all FY 2024 scores and all but one "days to deliver" are worse than last year.

Single-pc First-Class Mail				Presort First-Class Mail				Marketing Mail (letters)			
Week of 5/4/2024		5/6/2023		Week of 5/4/2024		5/6/2023		Week of 5/4/2024		5/6/2023	
Score	Days	Score	Days	Score	Days	Score	Days	Score	Days	Score	Days
65.18	3.38	83.49	2.88	72.26	3.17	87.71	2.83	88.70	4.09	96.16	3.56
48.70	3.86	77.84	3.06	51.21	3.80	86.50	2.76	75.30	7.04	96.48	4.14
77.52	2.76	87.05	2.54	86.55	2.48	94.55	2.32	96.55	2.98	97.11	2.56
75.97	2.94	90.02	2.56	89.31	2.54	94.55	2.34	81.67	5.34	90.01	4.48
74.47	4.06	84.60	3.90	85.74	3.65	89.33	3.71	88.81	5.46	92.27	5.25

The PMG and the USPS PR apparatus still claim the agency is delivering great service, but their own numbers simply don't support the hype – or reflect well in their "efficiency."

								Single-pc First-Class Mail				Presort First-Class Mail				Marketing Mail (letters)			
								Week of				Week of				Week of			
				Air		Road		5/4/2024		5/6/2023		5/4/2024		5/6/2023		5/4/2024		5/6/2023	
Origin City/ZIP	Origin Dist	Dest City/ZIP	Dest Dist	Miles	Time	Miles	Time	Score	Days	Score	Days	Score	Days	Score	Days	Score	Days	Score	Days
Boise 837	ID/MT/OR	Billings 591	ID/MT/OR	406	1:00	613	9:09	79.54	2.3	92.65	1.9	94.16	1.3	96.29	1.2	97.34	2.2	98.15	1.9
Boston 021	MA/RI	Pittsburgh 152	PA1	482	1:12	571	8:42	90.53	2.6	96.21	1.4	77.47	3.4	97.24	2.8	97.17	3.6	97.79	3.6
Columbus 432	OH2	Charleston 294	SC	525	1:18	632	9:29	70.48	3.3	76.51	3.3	78.16	3.3	91.02	2.9	94.58	4.0	94.11	3.7
Denver 801	CO/WY	Sioux Falls 625	IA/NE/SD	501	1:15	625	9:24	61.75	3.2	81.01	3.0	59.46	3.5	82.82	4.0	73.78	4.5	96.80	3.0
Detroit 481	MI1	Richmond 223	VA	445	1:06	623	9:12	79.88	3.0	82.55	3.1	86.74	2.9	87.03	3.1	97.98	4.0	96.71	4.4
N Houston 773	TX2	Memphis 381	TN	481	1:12	567	8:20	32.64	4.9	66.21	3.8	83.63	2.7	76.29	2.9	91.05	5.0	85.33	5.0
Louisville 402	KY/WV	Pensacola 325	FL1	548	1:22	618	8:55	37.51	4.4	86.36	3.2	36.40	3.9	96.43	2.4	81.94	5.3	98.93	4.0
Minneapolis 553	MN/ND	Indianapolis 462	IN	511	1:16	593	8:28	47.37	3.8	81.94	3.2	70.69	3.1	93.34	2.9	57.74	6.1	95.03	4.2
Reno 895	NV/UT	San Diego 921	CA6	493	1:13	559	8:55	84.60	3.0	90.35	2.8	89.74	2.8	95.18	2.7	99.24	2.8	98.97	2.8
San Antonio 782	TX3	Wichita 672	KS/MO	575	1:26	625	8:43	63.16	3.4	82.08	3.1	57.60	3.6	71.01	3.4	96.34	2.2	97.73	2.7
Albuquerque 871	AZ/NM	Las Vegas 891	NV/UT	483	1:12	576	8:05	80.07	2.8	88.60	2.6	86.39	2.9	95.44	2.4	97.32	3.9	97.77	3.3
Suburban MD 208	MD	Atlanta 303	GA	545	1:21	649	9:23	54.59	3.8	77.42	3.1	46.70	4.6	70.48	3.3	79.95	5.5	96.56	4.1
Chicago 606	IL1	Cleveland 441	OH1	307	0:46	346	4:59	44.55	3.9	71.01	3.3	45.76	3.9	88.46	2.8	67.64	6.4	97.13	4.4
Chicago 606	IL1	Des Moines 503	IA/NE/SD	309	0:46	333	4:45	55.27	3.5	83.33	2.8	70.73	3.3	88.82	2.6	86.70	5.5	96.98	4.1
Chicago 606	IL1	Louisville 402	KY/WV	270	0:40	297	4:30	33.40	4.4	84.12	2.9	25.64	4.4	86.82	2.7	66.36	11.3	96.44	3.9
Chicago 606	IL1	MI Metroplex 483	MI1	223	0:33	289	4:10	59.06	3.7	80.28	3.1	69.66	3.4	95.27	2.6	86.67	5.8	96.63	4.0
Chicago 606	IL1	St Louis 631	KS/MO	263	0:39	297	4:17	51.21	3.8	70.44	3.2	44.25	4.0	73.11	3.1	69.14	6.2	95.22	4.3
Salt Lk City 841	NV/UT	Billings 591	ID/MT/OR	387	0:58	559	8:08	72.33	3.1	89.28	2.4	85.82	2.5	95.10	2.7	98.62	3.2	97.90	2.8
Salt Lk City 841	NV/UT	Cheyenne 820	CO/WY	370	0:55	440	6:03	73.09	2.9	85.65	2.7	83.58	3.0	94.50	2.4	92.64	3.4	97.30	2.8
Salt Lk City 841	NV/UT	Albuquerque 871	AZ/NM	485	1:12	598	9:39	74.31	2.9	85.66	2.7	80.94	3.1	92.25	2.7	97.30	2.9	95.85	2.7
Salt Lk City 841	NV/UT	Las Vegas 891	NV/UT	363	0:54	421	5:32	88.28	2.2	88.75	2.1	94.82	0.9	96.80	1.1	96.66	2.5	96.97	2.2
Salt Lk City 841	NV/UT	Sacramento 957	CA2	532	1:19	649	8:44	79.57	2.7	85.93	2.8	87.60	2.9	94.10	2.7	97.52	2.9	97.53	2.3
Philadelphia 191	DE/PA 2	Buffalo 142	NY3	279	0:41	375	5:57	80.08	2.6	92.48	2.2	95.58	2.2	96.37	2.1	81.66	4.9	93.94	3.8
Philadelphia 191	DE/PA 2	Columbus 432	OH2	415	1:02	469	6:58	68.07	3.2	88.39	2.8	88.04	2.4	92.13	2.6	83.31	5.4	85.24	5.0
Philadelphia 191	DE/PA 2	Portland 041	ME/NH/VT	360	0:54	404	6:55	82.95	3.0	89.22	2.9	86.36	3.0	92.36	2.5	74.36	5.5	79.23	4.9
Philadelphia 191	DE/PA 2	Raleigh 276	NC	335	0:50	433	6:58	69.20	3.1	91.79	2.2	83.93	2.7	97.02	2.3	84.20	5.6	95.29	4.9
Philadelphia 191	DE/PA 2	Roanoke 240	VA	318	0:47	398	5:54	79.56	2.8	88.21	2.7	92.66	2.4	94.87	2.2	84.83	5.3	96.33	3.8
Albany 122	NY3	Tampa 336	FL2	1,127	2:49	1,269	18:28	89.03	3.5	86.90	3.7	94.19	3.4	88.75	3.7	99.18	3.1	97.32	4.2
Baltimore 212	MD	New Orleans 701	LA	999	2:29	1,122	16:12	64.32	4.4	89.34	3.7	63.49	3.4	79.31	3.8	88.19	5.1	96.06	4.8
Billings 591	ID/MT/OR	Reno 895	NV/UT	718	1:47	950	13:56	66.29	3.2	86.75	2.5	81.55	3.0	91.92	2.8	96.99	8.4	98.02	5.3
Bismarck 585	MN/ND	Charleston 253	KY/WV	1,131	2:49	1,324	18:25	67.10	3.5	85.54	3.0	79.39	3.4	91.67	3.2	71.51	5.6	91.69	4.5
Boston 021	MA/RI	Little Rock 722	AR/OK	1,257	3:08	1,485	21:14	68.32	4.2	79.91	4.2	54.19	4.5	87.81	4.1	79.03	5.9	68.69	6.0
Buffalo 142	NY3	Wichita 672	KS/MO	1,034	2:35	1,178	16:32	82.45	3.3	81.49	3.6	82.68	3.9	91.61	3.7	95.90	4.3	96.02	4.2
Carol Stream 603	IL1	Oakland 946	CA2	1,821	4:33	2,101	29:42	61.40	5.4	81.88	4.8	80.39	4.5	93.53	4.1	95.09	6.0	99.24	5.1
Charleston 294	SC	Omaha 681	IA/NE/SD	784	1:57	919	13:09	84.27	3.3	87.68	3.0	83.60	3.9	86.92	3.8	97.37	4.6	97.70	4.5
Charlotte 282	NC	Los Angeles 900	CA5	2,115	5:17	2,420	33:48	47.18	5.5	94.17	4.2	93.80	4.3	96.25	4.3	57.51	7.5	96.20	5.9
Denver 802	CO/WY	Nashville 372	TN	1,020	2:33	1,155	16:00	74.04	3.7	83.37	3.8	75.23	3.9	91.26	3.7	86.78	6.8	42.44	7.9
Des Moines 503	IA/NE/SD	Orlando 328	FL2	1,134	2:50	1,339	18:56	62.59	4.4	79.97	4.0	95.82	3.1	95.82	3.0	87.93	5.6	96.44	5.6
Des Moines 503	IA/NE/SD	Portland 972	ID/MT/OR	1,472	3:40	1,787	24:54	63.29	3.9	80.59	3.6	91.64	3.3	96.67	2.8	96.33	4.5	87.72	5.5
MI Metroplex 483	MI1	San Diego 921	CA6	1,968	4:55	2,343	32:29	88.48	4.3	93.08	4.6	96.71	3.8	95.94	4.3	99.75	4.1	84.39	6.5
Fresno 937	CA3	Louisville 402	KY/WV	1,857	4:38	2,208	30:22	95.86	3.5	91.11	4.5	94.96	3.8	77.16	5.1	99.24	4.2	94.73	6.0
Harrisburg 171	PA1	Dallas 752	TX1	1,217	3:02	1,382	19:13	87.85	3.5	91.02	3.5	93.56	3.1	96.32	3.2	96.82	4.6	98.18	5.1
Indianapolis 462	IN	Las Vegas 891	NV/UT	1,592	3:58	1,832	25:23	39.15	5.3	82.63	4.0	91.98	3.7	95.66	3.4	80.68	6.8	97.99	4.9
Kansas City 641	KS/MO	Santa Barbara 931	CA3	1,423	3:33	1,707	23:40	79.73	3.9	77.04	4.2	92.98	3.4	78.97	4.0	93.56	4.9	89.57	5.3
Los Angeles 900	CA5	Charleston 253	KY/WV	2,049	5:07	2,327	32:24	96.74	3.4	89.58	4.5	98.13	3.4	91.63	4.6	90.69	5.6	99.09	5.6
Memphis 381	TN	Syracuse 132	NY3	922	2:18	1,053	14:51	49.39	4.2	79.81	3.6	69.07	3.5	92.67	3.1	57.16	6.4	95.80	5.6
Merrifield 220	VA	N Houston 773	TX2	1,208	3:01	1,409	19:38	72.43	4.0	79.25	3.9	84.05	3.6	94.26	3.4	86.85	5.4	95.08	4.4
Mid-Island 118	NY2	Boise 837	ID/MT/OR	2,170	5:25	2,497	34:44	92.71	3.7	82.95	4.7	87.53	4.1	91.06	5.0	89.59	7.5	84.03	6.2
Milwaukee 532	WI	W Palm Beach 334	FL3	1,211	3:01	1,410	19:31	46.99	4.8	81.27	4.2	79.91	3.8	81.16	4.0	71.73	6.3	94.57	5.4
Minneapolis 554	MN/ND	Manchester 031	ME/NH/VT	1,089	2:43	1,423	20:23	78.88	3.9	83.71	3.9	91.91	3.8	84.13	3.9	85.08	5.9	94.35	4.9
Missoula 598	ID/MT/OR	Buffalo 142	NY3	1,726	4:18	2,100	29:18	89.11	4.0	75.60	4.7	98.85	3.0	92.22	4.5	99.66	3.5	90.84	6.3
Morgan 100	NY1	Austin 787	TX3	1,511	3:46	1,742	24:50	82.32	3.9	91.48	4.1	67.18	4.6	90.30	3.7	97.54	5.5	96.02	4.8
Nashville 372	TN	Bangor 044	ME/NH/VT	1,115	2:47	1,322	18:50	78.49	3.9	74.27	3.9	83.50	3.3	67.85	4.1	66.43	6.2	86.87	6.3
N Metro 300	GA	Albuquerque 871	AZ/NM	1,280	3:12	1,416	19:42	20.31	7.8	67.83	4.2	92.22	3.5	79.78	4.2	89.56	5.8	80.67	6.5
N Texas 750	TX1	Boston 021	MA/RI	1,551	3:52	1,777	26:17	64.93	4.4	85.49	4.1	82.15	3.6	85.60	3.9	85.21	5.9	91.26	6.4
Omaha 681	IA/NE/SD	Brooklyn 112	NY1	1,143	2:51	1,244	17:47	82.48	4.1	89.48	3.3	95.88	2.3	96.83	2.1	96.29	5.2	95.91	5.4
Orlando 328	FL2	Hartford 061	CT	1,036	2:35	1,182	16:39	89.56	3.7	89.92	3.8	97.35	3.2	96.62	3.4	99.78	4.1	99.53	3.8
Pittsburgh 152	PA1	Denver 802	CO/WY	1,318	3:17	1,448	20:07	67.27	4.1	79.24	4.2	79.63	4.0	85.26	4.0	87.43	5.7	94.26	5.5
Portland 972	ID/MT/OR	Dallas 752	TX1	1,631	4:04	2,033	28:16	87.25	3.7	88.39	4.0	94.51	3.5	92.85	4.3	95.20	5.2	97.78	5.5
Providence 029	MA/RI	Miami 331	FL3	1,217	3:02	1,457	21:32	79.58	4.2	83.06	4.2	66.19	4.2	60.59	4.6	79.91	5.5	91.68	5.0
Raleigh 276	NC	Austin 787	TX3	1,168	2:55	1,361	19:02	68.55	4.2	85.72	3.9	87.95	3.8	92.60	3.6	95.43	4.4	97.95	3.8
Salt Lk City 841	NV/UT	SS Jersey 080	NJ	1,926	4:48	2,151	29:48	89.78	4.4	86.20	4.8	94.11	4.8	96.44	4.2	97.19	5.8	96.73	5.2
San Francisco 941	CA1	Denver 802	CO/WY	947	2:22	1,246	18:06	89.32	3.5	89.37	3.6	94.36	3.1	95.25	3.1	97.97	4.6	99.25	4.4
San Jose 951	CA1	Missoula 598	ID/MT/OR	772	1:55	1,173	17:05	82.17	3.0	90.17	3.0	91.26	3.1	95.62	2.9	98.74	4.3	96.28	3.8
Sioux Falls 571	IA/NE/SD	Baltimore 212	MD	1,080	2:42	1,275	18:07	84.71	3.5	87.28	3.3	97.04	2.9	96.78	2.7	96.97	4.5	87.88	6.1
S Suburban 604	IL2	Santa Clarita 913	CA3	1,736	4:20	2,008	28:45	67.31	4.9	84.45	4.4	48.14	6.2	95.54	4.1	49.16	11.6	97.73	4.6
St Louis 631	KS/MO	Norfolk 235	VA	769	1:55	914	13:10	77.19	3.7	83.19	3.7	81.48	3.2	92.28	2.9	95.74	4.4	75.54	5.8
St Paul 551	MN/ND	Phoenix 850	AZ/NM	1,285	3:12	1,646	24:01	69.21	4.1	75.46	4.0	80.71	3.7	69.30	4.0	77.87	6.2	97.06	5.1
Tallahassee 323	FL1	Burlington 054	ME/NH/VT	1,142	2:51	1,378	19:54	70.38	3.9	92.16	3.7	92.58	3.5	90.03	3.7	96.00	4.8	97.98	4.7
Tampa 336	FL2	Rochester 146	NY3	1,085	2:42	1,279	18:21	91.90	3.6	92.09	3.7	97.26	3.1	92.83	3.3	99.50	4.3	98.60	4.3
Trenton 086	NJ	Ft Myers 339	FL2	1,023	2:33	1,191	17:45	86.10	3.6	91.12	3.5	94.26	3.0	97.09	3.1	94.39	4.8	89.84	5.3
Westchester 105	NY3	Fargo 581	MN/ND	1,206	3:00	1,459	20:43	74.72	3.8	76.05	3.9	85.03	3.9	87.72	3.5	97.38	4.1	97.37	4.2

UPU April Quarterly Meetings Provide Indications for the Future

The Universal Postal Union (UPU) holds quarterly meetings of its governing bodies between their regular Congress meetings every four years. The Council of Administration (CA) is generally concerned with policy and inter-governmental issues and the Postal Operations Council (POC) with more practical issue of mail transport and exchange.

AED/EAD: country laws vs. treaty obligations

Advanced Electronic Data (AED) in the US or Electronic Advanced Data (EAD) in many other countries is required by many countries for imported goods. This applies to packages through the mail as well as larger items. The US requires AED for postal items under the STOP Act to identify and limit potentially illegal items, such as drugs and counterfeit goods, as do other countries. AED can also be used to identify what items are subject to customs duty or sales taxes, as it is in the EU which has increasingly required more information in the AED sent to its 27 member countries.

Problems continue with what the countries receiving the information want to receive and what they do receive. Private estimates are that approximately 60 – 65% of items have sometimes incomplete AED, well under the UPU's goal of 90% with complete information. (Of course, the US government would like 100% compliance, as presumably would other countries.) Some countries do not have the technical capabilities to send the information in advance, while tracking the location of the matching packages to hold or forward them as required by the country of destination. And some countries question the legal basis for requiring AED, while not complying with some or all the AED requirements.

This latter issue became more serious when the EU announced it would require AED for goods that transited or were transshipped through their territory in 2024. Until then, only items remaining in the destination country required AED. The UPU treaty does not explicitly allow this requirement. A majority of countries at the UPU Congress in late 2023 rejected amendments to the treaty. Amendments were again rejected by the POC at their January 2024 meeting, with a referral to the CA for governmental policy consideration. A working group continued to discuss a potential solution.

At the April POC meeting, no resolution was reached; the working group continues. Notably, the meeting was less contentious than the January meeting. A practical solution that ignores the fundamental tension between treaty obligations and national laws, while allowing sufficient compliance from the countries objecting, is being discussed. Such a solution might allow better compliance for all countries, including the US, looking for better information on inbound goods.

In the meantime, the EU delayed implementation of the requirement for AED on transit and transshipped goods until April 1, 2024. Those at the UPU meetings noted that no major problems had occurred. Others have observed that may be due more to the lack of strict enforcement by customs officials in the EU countries. The practical hurdles for postal operators and for air carriers are substantial. If enforcement is strict, it will result in delayed and returned packages.

Customs Forms

The UPU is working with the World Customs Organization (WCO) to modify the postal customs forms to make them more consistent with better information and more compliance checks. The UPU staff, called the International Bureau (IB), and many government and postal officials, believe verifying some address elements in the sender's and recipient's addresses would add some assurance that both parties are legitimate.

Current tests show a great deal of variation in the accuracy of address information when postal authorities are asked to verify it. This applies to both the sender's and recipient's addresses. It's particularly surprising that the sender's address has formatting problems, since the sender is presumably a resident of the country where the package originates and would know its correct format. The recipient would be in another country and the address format may be substantially different from the one in the sender's country.

If postal operators introduce the compliance checks on addresses currently being discussed at the UPU, postal code (ZIP code) formats, state or provinces, and their match to cities or towns are the likely requirements. The current considerations are for items that fail address checks would be returned to the sender or would have further checks by postal authorities. In any case, the mail item would be delayed, might require re-mailing (with new postage), or be confiscated.

Mailers should be aware that these changes are likely to come, although not quickly, giving them time to adjust their databases and address management.

More Self-Declared Rates to Come?

As noted in a UPU document presented at the POC meetings, the systems for remuneration (what postal operators pay each other for delivering international mail) have evolved independently for letter mail, parcel post and EMS (express mail). Letter-mail was further divided when so-called self-declared rates for packages containing goods was added in 2019. (Smaller packages, under 4.4 pounds, are classified as letter mail class E.)

In effect, there are now four independent systems that are not aligned in the remuneration for mail across classes.

To align these rates further, the proposal has three options for extending "self-declared" rates to further UPU classes of mail. The negotiated UPU's "self-declared" rights have a floor and ceiling, with limits on increases set by the UPU, while the calculations of the "self-declared" rates are based on domestic mail rates and are set by the individual countries setting them. The UPU verifies that these rates do not violate their rules for floors, ceilings, and increases. The calculations can be complicated, considering domestic postal rates, previous rates, and the country's level of development, all translated into rates per kilo(gram) and per item in SDRs (Special Drawing Rights, a way for international organizations to calculate across currencies.) The spreadsheets and assumptions used by the UPU's IB to make their calculations have not been made available to the public.

Obviously, what the USPS pays other postal operators to deliver mail in their countries enters into the calculation of the postal rates paid by US mailers for international mail. We were told that "self-declared" rates for small packages would let the USPS make back its costs for international packages. Given recent USPS financials, it did not.

Do not expect lower rates or better financial performance from the USPS on international mail if the so-called self-declared rates are extended to other mail classes.

Inviting the Private Sector

The UPU plans to establish a user-funded subsidiary body on interoperability, tentatively named the "Ready to Market Interoperability Group" (RMIG) and invite Wider Postal Sector Players (WPSPs) in addition to postal operators. In the UPU's jargon, WPSPs are private companies that work in or intersect with the postal sector—logistics and transport companies, mail consolidators, mail service providers, etc.

The members of the PMIG will pay a fee in one of six classes of membership. The least expensive is class 1 at CHF 5,000 ($ 5,506) and the most expensive is a Founding member at CHF 50,000 ($ 55,065). Voting rights attached to each class increase from 1 vote for class 1 to 10 votes for a Founding member. The RMIG will be formed when CHF 609,0000 ($ 670,696) in membership fees are collected, and include a General Assembly, open to all members; a Steering Committee of the Chair, Vice Chair, and five members; and any subgroups approved by the General Assembly. The RMIG will then formulate plans for moving forward to develop the areas and applications for cooperation between the UPU and the private sector.

To date, there has been considerable skepticism in the private sector regarding the potential advantages of joining a user-funded UPU group with no clear benefit proposition, relatively high costs, and a probable lengthy time until any benefits are available. Some observers have also pointed out that potential applications mentioned by the UPU are often already available in the private sector.

This article was produced by Merry Law, Mailers Hub's expert consultant on international mail. Merry may be reached at MLaw@WorldVu.com.

Building a Better "Back-up" Person

During a recent assignment, I had the opportunity to work with a company that was facing significant challenges in its production processes. The magnitude of their struggle became evident when the production manager took a well-deserved vacation, leaving the staff to tackle a seemingly routine task. To their dismay, they found themselves unable to perform the task without the manager's guidance.

The incident shed light on the risks associated with relying solely on individual expertise or specific personnel within an organization. While it is undoubtedly valuable to have skilled and experienced individuals leading various functions, it is equally important to have contingency plans in place. This ensures that operations can continue smoothly even when key team members are absent or unavailable.

The situation presented an opportunity for the company to reevaluate its approach to contingency planning. By acknowledging the limitations of a dependency on a single individual, they could recognize the need for a more sustainable and resilient system. Creating redundancy and cultivating back-up personnel not only mitigates risks but also enhances overall operational efficiency.

Steps in the Process

Building a better back-up person involves several crucial steps. First, it requires identifying critical roles and tasks within the organization that could potentially be disrupted by the absence of key personnel. These could include specialized knowledge, technical skills, or decision-making authority. Once these roles are identified, the company can proactively work towards cross-training and skill development programs. This enables employees to acquire the necessary expertise and confidence to assume additional responsibilities when needed.

The next step involves taking advantage of the benefits of video training. Video training is becoming part of our culture. As more people discover YouTube videos on how to fix our garage door or build a new deck, the value of video training is undeniable. In addition, with today's smart phones, it doesn't cost much to make a video – and it's easy to do. If you need a video about how to set up a machine or create a job ticket, simply ask your best operator how they do it. All you have to do is ask them to describe and show the process, why they are performing each step, and how they're doing it. And after practicing for a few minutes, you can create a video with important content.

Once the videos are completed, they can be edited and saved in a folder accessible by anyone in the company. When the back-up person has to perform a task that they may not remember because they were trained on it six months ago, all they have to do is access a file, and they will see exactly how to perform that task.

In conclusion, the incident I witnessed during my recent assignment highlighted the importance of building a better back-up person within an organization. Relying solely on individual expertise or memory of past training poses significant risks, as demonstrated by the production struggles faced by the company when their manager was absent. By proactively identifying critical roles, implementing training programs, sharing knowledge, and fostering a collaborative culture, companies can build resilience and ensure smooth operations, even in the absence of key personnel.

This article was produced by industry consultant Howie Fenton. With over 30 years of experience, he's established himself as a leading advisor, author, and trainer in the graphic arts industry. His subject matter expertise lies in benchmarking operational and financial performance, which is underpinned by both practical experience and extensive market research. Fenton has worked with leading organizations such as GATF, PIA, NAPL, and Keypoint Intelligence. Today, he heads his own company, applying his understanding of process improvement and best practices to provide training and consulting. For more information, visit howiefentonconsulting.com or email him at howiemfenton@gmail.com.

Navigating Lousy Waters

These are not fun times to be a mailer. Come to think of it, I can think of very few times when a lot of folks in our industry said, “Hey! This is getting pretty easy!” Still, there were times recently when demand actually caught up with supply, and mailers could dare to charge a little more. Of course, it was nearly impossible to find labor or paper, so even that wasn’t particularly fun. I can feel for Goldilocks – “just right” is hard to find.

Today, mail volume seems to be dropping precipitously, as detailed in this-here newsletter by Dr. Raymond. And I think it is dropping for a variety of reasons.

Dave Loos, from MCS, during a presentation at a recent MFSA conference in Houston (you really should be going to those) pointed out a couple of reasons why volume may be down. Interest rates and inflation have dramatically reduced the volume of credit card and mortgage marketing volume, two of the largest users of direct mail. And, various natural disasters, in Florida and California in particular, have the insurance industry revaluating their very business models – and greatly reducing their direct mail.

And we haven’t even gotten to our friends at the Postal Service. Higher rates and poorer service are not the easiest thing to sell – and *we* are really the ones who need to sell it.

Price increases have reached a point where they really may be driving mail out of the system. Candidly, mailers have always been a bit whiney about any increase in postage. The 4.3% Exigent Adjustment a few years back had mailers passing out, terrified of what this would do to the industry. Meh. In the end, mail owners swallowed hard and paid it. What we have today is different – an ongoing, consistent increase. It is forcing mailing customers to consider alternative channels, or to simply mail less.

All of that notwithstanding, there is still a large volume of mail to be sent, and someone needs to stuff those envelopes. It might as well be you.

The nonprofit segment of the market appears, to me, as though it is maintaining volume. The biggest donors simply respond better to direct mail than to alternative channels. Home services, health insurance, and many other segments remain strong as well. Your challenge as a mailer is twofold: Try to hold on to existing business, and add value and revenue where you can. Holding on to business relies, of course on getting the basics right to begin with – be affordable and accurate – make your drop dates and do good work.

But there are other critical areas where your can make your company more valuable to your customers:

- Do everything you can to be sure your customers are paying the lowest postage available. Commingle and drop ship where you can. Evaluate every mailing to optimize postage.
- In the same vein, look hard at current and upcoming USPS promotions. This is the one lifeline the Postal Service is handing us to help mitigate postage increases. Next year’s promotion landscape is much more complicated, but there are great opportunities to combine promotions and even get a postage credit back to you, year-round. Make sure your postal experts know the promotions inside and out, and how they apply to your customers.
- Track the mail (you knew I had to get that one in there, didn’t you?). But don’t just track it behind the scenes – be proactive with the information. Push it to your customers so they know exactly what is happening with their mail. Use the delivery data to have a conversation with your clients.
- Be proactive with your customers’ data quality. Don’t just count on CASS and NCOA. Use ACS wherever possible to identify those changes that weren’t caught by other processes and encourage your customers to make use of that data to improve their lists.

All these items make your company more “sticky.” Your customers will lose something if they use another mailer and can’t get those same services. And they are easy to sell – they make sense and are a natural extension of the services you already provide. And they are just examples – look hard at your services and see where else you can provide more.

Then maybe you can sit back and say, “Hey! This is easy!”

This article was produced by Dave Lewis, President of SnailWorks, based in Frederick (MD). Dave is a recognized industry expert and frequent speaker at postal and industry functions. Dave has held leadership roles in several industry associations, has served as a Mailers Hub representative on MTAC, and is the 2024-2025 president of the Mailing and Fulfillment Services Association. Dave is a graduate of the University of Maryland. When he isn’t mailing and marketing stuff, Dave enjoys buying (and even occasionally playing) guitars and traveling.

EMA Releases its 2023 Job Study

The Envelope Manufacturers Association’s EMA Foundation has released its latest study of the role of mail in the American economy. Produced by the foundation’s Institute for Postal Studies, the study works with full-year 2023 statistical data from a variety of sources, including the Bureau of labor Statistics and the US Census Bureau.

The study document reported that the mailing industry’s 7.91 million jobs represent 5% of the nation’s total jobs, up 8% from 2018. The industry generated $1.92 trillion in sales revenue in 2023, 23.7% more than five years earlier. Given current trends, it may not be surprising that jobs related to the production of traditional hard-copy mail declined, while jobs associated with packaging and shipping grew.

In addition to the 29-page report, the foundation also produced a card form of the essential information and details of the industry’s significance in each state and a more detailed listing of job and revenue by Congressional district (see the next two pages). These documents are useful when speaking with politicians about postal and related issues.

The report, summary card, and district data are available for download from the foundation’s website at https://www.envelope.org/emaf/institute-for-postal-studies/.

EMA Foundation's 2023 Mailing Industry Economic Job Study Jobs and Sales Revenue by State

THE U.S. MAILING INDUSTRY IS AN ECONOMIC POWERHOUSE WITH 7.9 MILLION JOBS AND $1.9 TRILLION IN SALES REVENUE

Mailing Industry Overall

- The U.S. mailing industry's 7.9 million jobs represent 5.0% of the nation's total civilian labor force.
- The mailing industry influences every private and public sector of the economy and provides jobs in every state and congressional district.
- Overall mailing industry jobs increased by 8.0%, totaling 584,013 jobs, from 2018 to 2022 due to more packaged products being delivered through the mail stream, resulting in an increase in employment in private sector couriers and their suppliers.
- From 2018 to 2022, traditional mail jobs dropped by 7%, totaling a loss of 409,400 jobs, whereas packaging jobs grew by 65% or almost 1 million jobs.

Jobs Declined Significantly in the Traditional Mail Industry and Grew in Packaging

- Decline in Jobs
  - ↓ Paper, Printing, Printing Industry Suppliers, and Direct Mail Design
  - ↓ Mail Management in all Industries
  - ↓ Traditional Direct Mail, Catalog, and Magazine
- Growth in Jobs
  - ↑ Private Sector Delivery Services (e.g. Fed-ex, UPS, last-mile services)
  - ↑ Delivery Suppliers
  - ↑ Internet Shopping and Mail Order Houses (e.g. Amazon)
  - ↑ Brick and Mortar Retailers Fulfilling Sales through the Mail Stream

Traditional Mail Jobs Are At Risk

- Traditional mail volume consisting of bills & statements and marketing mail has declined substantially.
- With the loss of overall mail volume from 2018 to 2022,
  - Jobs from paper, printing, printing industry suppliers, & mail manufacturing fell by 9%,
  - Jobs associated with handling letters and packages in businesses have declined by 22%, and
  - Jobs generated by catalog, direct mail, magazine ads, inserts, and mail-related publishing dropped by 4%.

Packaging and Courier Jobs Growing More Competitive

- Most of the job increase is due to the growth in parcel delivery.
- Private sector delivery jobs (UPS, FedEx, last mile delivery services, etc.) have grown by 57% since 2018.
- This trend was likely accelerated by the pandemic, online shopping, and working from home.

Mailing Industry Revenue

- The U.S. mailing industry contributes 4.1% or $1.9 Trillion in sales revenue to the U.S. economy.
- Mailing industry revenues include dollars received by the USPS and other carriers, revenues received by suppliers of mailing services (such as envelopes, paper suppliers, and printers) and sales of goods and services by direct mail and catalog marketers resulting from their mail-based advertising.

About the Study

- The study is available on the EMA Foundation's website at: https://www.envelope.org/emaf/institute-for-postal-studies
- For more information, please contact Marie Clarke, EMA President, at 703-739-2200 or mclarke@envelope.org

The 2023 U.S. Mailing Industry Economic Job and Revenue Study is available on the EMA Foundation's website at https://www.envelope.org/emaf/institute-for-postal-studies . This study analyzes the most recent information collected by U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in its Occupation Employment Statistics program on employment by occupation and industry, U.S. Census Bureau, United States Postal Service, and Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Affairs. EMA is the world's largest association devoted to the envelope manufacturing and paper-based communications industry.

EMA Foundation’s 2023 Mailing Industry Economic Job Study
Jobs and Sales Revenue by State

	STATE	JOBS	REVENUE ($ BILLIONS)		STATE	JOBS	REVENUE ($ BILLIONS)
1	Alabama	119,963	$20.49	26	Missouri	146,820	$29.74
2	Alaska	17,439	$4.62	27	Montana	26,285	$4.94
3	Arizona	173,196	$34.28	28	Nebraska	46,741	$12.28
4	Arkansas	72,024	$11.96	29	Nevada	74,836	$16.26
5	California	933,970	$279.04	30	New Hampshire	33,062	$8.13
6	Colorado	138,344	$35.16	31	New Jersey	220,584	$55.81
7	Connecticut	85,823	$24.63	32	New Mexico	50,364	$9.17
8	Delaware	23,883	$6.70	33	New York	472,150	$151.48
9	District of Columbia	15,949	$12.44	34	North Carolina	251,147	$54.61
10	Florida	518,452	$103.64	35	North Dakota	18,446	$5.26
11	Georgia	257,060	$56.92	36	Ohio	280,397	$60.99
12	Hawaii	34,313	$7.57	37	Oklahoma	94,893	$17.46
13	Idaho	45,247	$7.81	38	Oregon	101,070	$22.24
14	Illinois	301,616	$77.57	39	Pennsylvania	308,581	$69.76
15	Indiana	162,001	$34.92	40	Rhode Island	26,079	$5.50
16	Iowa	76,004	$18.02	41	South Carolina	123,553	$22.48
17	Kansas	69,851	$15.79	42	South Dakota	21,312	$5.02
18	Kentucky	107,336	$19.45	43	Tennessee	166,030	$35.00
19	Louisiana	110,065	$21.29	44	Texas	702,848	$167.42
20	Maine	32,663	$6.30	45	Utah	79,453	$18.34
21	Maryland	146,747	$36.04	46	Vermont	15,366	$3.03
22	Massachusetts	166,256	$52.94	47	Virginia	205,710	$49.03
23	Michigan	239,237	$47.20	48	Washington	184,203	$55.57
24	Minnesota	135,852	$34.20	49	West Virginia	42,439	$7.33
25	Mississippi	70,217	$10.36	50	Wisconsin	140,339	$30.30
				51	Wyoming	13,777	$3.51

Prepared by Cheryl Chapman of Sylvamo and Chair of the EMA Foundation’s Institute of Postal Studies and Peter Johnson, PhD, Principal, emergentMeasures Research

The 2023 U.S. Mailing Industry Economic Job and Revenue Study is available on the EMA Foundation’s website at https://www.envelope.org/emaf/institute-for-postal-studies . This study analyzes the most recent information collected by U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in its Occupation Employment Statistics program on employment by occupation and industry, U.S. Census Bureau, United States Postal Service, and Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Economic Affairs. EMA is the world’s largest association devoted to the envelope manufacturing and paper-based communications industry.

At Mid-Year, New Contracts Exceeding Prior Years

A key element of Postmaster General Louis DeJoy's 10-Year Plan is growing the agency's package volume and revenue to offset the decline of traditional hard-copy mail. To do so, the USPS has been adjusting its package products to better align them to what's offered by competitors.

Data about competitive product contracts during the first half of fiscal 2024 (Postal Quarters I & II) shows mixed results. The number of competitive product contracts that were approved by the Postal Regulatory Commission, based on data from the PRC's website, shows that, for the half-year, 216 new contracts were approved, compared to 135 over the same period a year earlier, while 140 were terminated, compared to 81 over the first half of FY 2023. Proportionally, FY 2024 so far is falling behind FY 2023

Over the period FY 2021-FY 2023, there were 538 contracts approved, but 599 contracts were terminated. However, the fourteen quarter total now has turned more favorable, with 754 new contracts versus 739 terminated, thanks to a more favorable balance so far this year.

FY	PQ I		PQ II		PQ III		PQ IV		FY Total	
2021	57	66	25	63	27	106	27	44	136	279
2022	37	40	11	35	22	21	55	49	125	139
2023	105	41	30	40	40	45	102	55	277	181
2024	136	68	80	72	--	--	--	--	216	140
Total	335	215	146	210	--	--	--	--	--	--

However, the number of contracts doesn't equate to actual package volume. According to the Postal Service's quarterly *Revenue, Pieces, and Weight* reports filed with the PRC, competitive product volume has shown a different pattern.

FY	PQ I	PQ II	PQ III	PQ IV	FY Total
2021	2,091,684	1,772,532	1,763,065	1,627,483	7,254,759
2022	1,908,125	1,682,753	1,674,794	1,627,270	6,892,942
2023	1,849,843	1,602,791	1,634,841	1,659,214	6,746,688
2024	1,951,165	1,632,057	--	--	3,583,222
Total	7,800,817	6,690,133	--	--	--

The consistent pattern of year-over-year loss of competitive product volume over the FY 2021-FY 2023 period, compared to the variability of new and terminated contracts, suggests not only that the number of contracts gained or lost isn't a reliable indicator, but that the volume of individual contracts varies widely.

The USPS share of what it considers "large" and "small" packages is about the same – around 20% of the market – but its share of "medium" sized items is only about 5%. Accordingly, absent information from the Postal Service, it's not possible to discern from publicly-available data either which segments have had the most (or least) growth or loss, or where the USPS is concentrating its efforts to build volume.

Regardless, gaining new package business is one thing, providing service sufficient to retain it is something else.

April Financials: Help from Workers' Comp

Last month, USPS Board of Governors chair Roman Martinez IV decried the impact of "uncontrollable expenses," such as the workers' compensation liability, on Postal Service financial results. In April, however, the workers' comp liability swung in the Postal Service's favor – by $623 million – illustrating how that variable can just as easily be a benefit, trimming the month's loss by over 92%.

Volume for the four market-dominant classes was down 0.1% from April 2023, while competitive product volume was 7.8% higher.

Total revenue was up 5.3% compared to April 2023. Total expenses were 7.4% below plan and 3.7% lower than a year earlier. Nonetheless, the result was a $53 million net loss for the month, pushing the total loss for the year to date to $3.592 billion – on pace for a $6+ billion loss for the year.

Volume and revenue

Total market-dominant mail volume was 0.1% lower than April 2023; First-Class Mail volume was down 1.9% but Marketing Mail grew 1.6% compared to the same period last year; competitive products volume was up 7.7%. Total USPS volume was 9.065 billion pieces, up 0.3% from SPLY.

First-Class Mail: 3.580 bln pcs, -1.9%; 27.186 bln pcs, -3.7% YTD
Marketing Mail: 4.619 bln pcs, +1.6%; 33.966 bln pcs, -7.2% YTD
Periodicals: 229.2 mln pcs, -6.9%; 1.632 bln pcs, -8.5% YTD
Total Mkt Dom: 8.492 bln pcs, -0.1%; 63.328 bln pcs, -5.7% YTD
Total Competitive: 552.5 mln pcs, +7.7%; 4.063 bln pcs, +4.4% YTD
Total USPS: 9.065 bln pcs, +0.3%; 65.579 bln pcs, -5.2% YTD

The uptick in year-over-year-volume, despite market-dominant price increases totaling over 7.3% since April 2023, contributed to a 4.5% jump in market-dominant revenue, compared to last April. USPS operating revenue for the month was $6.449 billion, with the classes mixed:

First-Class Mail: $2.042 bln, +3.9%; $15.360 bln, +3.6% YTD
Marketing Mail: $1.235 bln, +6.3%; $9.050 bln, -0.9% YTD
Periodicals: $74.490 mln, +0.2%; $534.22 mln, -1.0% YTD
Total Mkt Dominant: $3.666 bln, +4.5%; $27.158 bln, +1.5% YTD
Total Competitive: $2.549 bln, +7.5%; $18.832 bln, +2.7% YTD
Total USPS: $6.449 bln, +5.3%; $47.775 bln, +1.8% YTD

Expenses and workhours

Like the volume and revenue numbers, expenses varied compared to plan and SPLY. Total "controllable" compensation and benefit costs in April were $4.999 billion, 2.2% over plan and 7.7% higher than April 2023; total expenses were $6.598 billion, 7.4% under plan and 3.6% below a year earlier.

However, workhour usage was 1.7% over plan and 3.6% more than a year earlier. Total workhours for the year-to-date were 1.0% over plan and only 0.8% below SPLY YTD. Moreover, despite less work, the USPS workforce is larger, and with *more* career employees.

Month's end complement: 645,001 employees (531,710 career, 113,291 non-career) **+0.77%** compared to April 2023 (640,042 employees: 520,219 career, 119,823 non-career), but **2.21% more** *career* workers.

Compared to early-pandemic April 2020, total USPS volume was up 4.8% (market dominant 5.77% higher; competitive down 7.6%), while operating revenue, after price increases totaling nearly 25%, was up only 13.42%; total workhours were up 1.43% from four years ago. *All the numbers are on the next page.*

USPS Preliminary Information (Unaudited) – April 2024 [1]

OPERATING DATA OVERVIEW [1, 2]	Current Period					Year-to-Date				
Revenue/Volume/Workhours (Millions)	**Actual**	**Plan**	**SPLY**	**% Plan Var**	**% SPLY Var**	**Actual**	**Plan**	**SPLY** [5]	**% Plan Var**	**% SPLY Var**
Revenue										
Operating Revenue	$6,449	$6,759	$6,125	-4.6%	5.3%	$47,775	$48,243	$46,927	-1.0%	1.8%
Other Revenue	--	--	$1	NMF	-100.0%	$6	$3	$108	100.0%	-94.4%
Total Revenue	$6,449	$6,759	$6,126	-4.6%	5.3%	$47,781	$48,246	$47,035	-1.0%	1.6%
Operating Expenses										
Personnel Compensation and Benefits	$4,835	$5,351	$5,124	-9.6%	-5.6%	$39,114	$38,346	$38,456	2.0%	1.7%
Transportation	$714	$757	$760	-5.7%	-6.1%	$5,383	$5,646	$6,202	-4.7%	-13.2%
Supplies and Services	$264	$254	$252	3.9%	4.8%	$1,988	$1,910	$1,947	4.1%	2.1%
Other Expenses	$739	$717	$671	3.1%	10.1%	$5,156	$5,195	$4,867	-0.8%	5.9%
Total Operating Expenses	$6,552	$7,079	$6,807	-7.4%	-3.7%	$51,641	$51,097	$51,472	1.1%	0.3%
Net Operating Income/Loss	**-$103**	-$320	-$681			**-$3,860**	-$2,851	-$4,437		
Interest Income	$96	$78	$75	23.1%	28.0%	$580	$577	$509	0.5%	13.9%
Interest Expense	$46	$49	$35	-6.1%	31.4%	$312	$337	$220	-7.4%	41.8%
Net Income/Loss	**-$53**	-$291	-$641			**-$3,592**	-$2,611	-$4,148		
Mail Volume										
Total Market Dominant Products [3]	8,492	8,461	8,503	0.4%	-0.1%	63,329	60,742	67,146	4.3%	-5.7%
Total Competitive Products [3]	553	555	513	-0.4%	7.8%	4,063	4,081	3,892	-0.4%	4.4%
Total International Products	20	27	25	-24.6%	-20.0%	188	192	212	-2.1%	-11.3%
Total Mail Volume	9,065	9,043	9,041	0.2%	0.3%	67,580	65,015	71,250	3.9%	-5.2%
Total Workhours	96	94	93	2.1%	3.2%	677	670	682	1.0%	-0.7%
Total Career Employees	**531,710**		520,219		**2.2%**					
Total Non-Career Employees	**113,291**		119,823		**-5.5%**					

MAIL VOLUME and REVENUE [1, 2]	Current period			Year-to-Date		
Pieces and Dollars (Thousands)	**Actual**	**SPLY**	**% SPLY Var**	**Actual**	**SPLY**	**% SPLY Var**
First Class (excl. all parcels and Int'l.)						
Volume	3,579,564	3,649,949	-1.9%	27,185,793	28,221,420	-3.7%
Revenue	$2,041,949	$1,966,215	3.9%	$15,359,777	$14,833,138	3.6%
Periodicals						
Volume	229,197	246,132	-6.9%	1,631,707	1,783,986	-8.5%
Revenue	$74,490	$74,370	0.2%	$534,215	$539,446	-1.0%
Marketing Mail (excl. all parcels and Int'l.)						
Volume	4,619,474	4,548,253	1.6%	33,966,249	36,593,831	-7.2%
Revenue	$1,235,096	$1,161,540	6.3%	$9,050,103	$9,134,309	-0.9%
Package Svcs. (ex. Inb'd. Intl Surf. PP @ UPU rates)						
Volume	30,979	31,423	-1.4%	258,998	263,805	-1.8%
Revenue	$68,668	$64,574	6.3%	$542,019	$530,801	2.1%
All other Market Dominant Mail						
Volume	33,159	27,147	22.1%	285,740	284,423	0.5%
Revenue	$245,516	$239,627	2.5%	$1,671,916	$1,709,280	-2.2%
Total Market Dominant Products *(ex. all Int'l.)*						
Volume	8,492,373	8,502,904	-0.1%	63,328,487	67,147,465	-5.7%
Revenue	$3,665,719	$3,506,326	4.5%	$27,158,031	$26,746,974	1.5%
Shipping and Package Services						
Volume	552,539	512,841	7.7%	4,062,783	3,891,903	4.4%
Revenue	$2,549,467	$2,372,162	7.5%	$18,832,159	$18,337,625	2.7%
All other Competitive Products						
Volume	-	-	0.0%	-	-	0.0%
Revenue	$126,392	$121,315	4.2%	$875,293	$855,810	2.0%
Total Competitive Products *(ex. all Int'l.)*						
Volume	552,539	512,841	7.7%	4,062,783	3,891,903	4.4%
Revenue	$2,675,859	$2,493,477	7.3%	$19,707,452	$19,193,435	2.7%
Total International [4]						
Volume	20,249	25,225	-19.7%	187,533	211,901	-11.5%
Revenue	$107,116	$125,562	-14.7%	$909,774	$986,023	-7.7%
Total						
Volume	**9,065,160**	9,040,970	**0.3%**	**67,578,802**	71,251,269	**-5.2%**
Revenue	**$6,448,694**	$6,125,363	**5.3%**	**$47,775,257**	$46,926,431	**1.8%**

EXPENSES OVERVIEW [1, 2]	Current Period					Year-to-Date				
Dollars (Millions)	**Actual**	**Plan**	**SPLY**	**% Plan Var**	**% SPLY Var**	**Actual**	**Plan**	**SPLY**	**% Plan Var**	**% SPLY Var**
Controllable Pers. Comp. & Benefits	$4,999	$4,892	$4,673	2.2%	7.0%	$35,584	$35,137	$34,808	1.3%	2.2%
FERS Unfunded Liabilities Amortization [6]	$192	$192	$158	0.0%	21.5%	$1,342	$1,342	$1,108	0.0%	21.1%
CSRS Unfunded Liabilities Amortization [6]	$267	$267	$258	0.0%	3.5%	$1,867	$1,867	$1,808	0.0%	3.3%
Workers' Compensation [7]	-$623	$ --	$35	NMF	NMF	$321	$ --	$732	NMF	-56.1%
Total Pers. Comp. & Benefits	$4,835	$5,351	$5,124	-9.6%	-5.6%	$39,114	$38,346	$38,546	2.0%	1.7%
Total Non-Personnel Expenses	$1,717	$1,728	$1,683	-0.6%	2.0%	$12,527	$12,751	$13,016	-1.8%	-3.8%
Total Expenses (incl. interest)	**$6,598**	$7,128	$6,842	-7.4%	**-3.6%**	**$51,953**	$51,434	$51,692	**1.0%**	**0.5%**

WORKHOURS [1, 2, 3]	Current Period					Year-to-Date				
Workhours (Thousands)	**Actual**	**Plan**	**SPLY**	**% Plan Var**	**% SPLY Var**	**Actual**	**Plan**	**SPLY**	**% Plan Var**	**% SPLY Var**
City Delivery	35,628	34,479	33,977	3.3%	4.9%	248,830	243,960	248,695	2.0%	0.1%
Mail Processing	15,005	14,664	15,214	2.3%	-1.4%	115,229	113,508	120,198	1.5%	-4.1%
Customer Services & Retail	11,995	11,656	11,595	2.9%	3.4%	83,881	82,668	85,802	1.5%	-2.2%
Rural Delivery	18,723	18,514	18,363	1.1%	2.0%	129,725	129,077	131,647	0.5%	-1.5%
Other	14,554	14,966	13,430	-2.8%	8.4%	99,043	100,957	95,813	-1.9%	3.4%
Total Workhours	**95,905**	94,279	92,579	**1.7%**	**3.6%**	**676,708**	670,170	682,155	**1.0%**	**-0.8%**

[1]/April 2024 had one delivery day more and 1.75 retail days more compared to April 2023. YTD has one delivery day and 1.5 more retail days compared to the same period last year (SPLY). [2]/Numbers may not add due to rounding and/or adjustments. Percentages calculated using unrounded numbers. The sampling portion of the RPW system is designed to be statistically valid on a quarterly and annual basis. [3]/Excludes all International. [4]/Includes Current Period Market Dominant Volume of 9,557 and Revenue of $14,246; SPLY Market Dominant Volume of 12,896 (-25.9%) and Revenue of $19,386 (-26.5%). Also includes Current Period Competitive Volume of 10,692 and Revenue of $92,870; SPLY Competitive Volume of 12,329 (-13.3%) and Revenue of $106,176 (-12.5%). [5]/ This represents the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) estimated amortization expense related to the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) and Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). The actual invoices will be received between September 2024 and October 2024. [6]/This represents non-cash adjustments: the impact of discount and inflation rate changes and the actuarial revaluation of new and existing cases. NMF = Not Meaningful Figure, percentages +/- 200% or greater.

All the Official Stuff

Federal Register

Postal Service

NOTICES

May 21: Sunshine Act Meetings, 44718; International Product Change: International Priority Airmail, Commercial ePacket, Priority Mail Express International, and Priority Mail International Agreement, 44718.

May 22: International Product Change [2]: International Priority Airmail, Commercial ePacket, Priority Mail Express International, and Priority Mail International Agreement [2], 45036, 45036.

May 23: Product Change [10]: Priority Mail Express, Priority Mail, and USPS Ground Advantage Negotiated Service Agreement [3], 45710. 45711, 45711; Priority Mail and USPS Ground Advantage Negotiated Service Agreement [7], 45710, 45710, 45710, 45710, 45711, 45711, 45711.

May 31: Product Change [15]: Priority Mail Express, Priority Mail, and USPS Ground Advantage Negotiated Service Agreement [10], 47186, 47186, 47186, 47187, 47187, 47187, 47188, 47188, 47188, 47188; Priority Mail and USPS Ground Advantage Negotiated Service Agreement [5], 47186, 47187, 47187, 47188, 47189.

PROPOSED RULES

[None].

FINAL RULES

[None].

Postal Regulatory Commission

NOTICES

May 21: New Postal Products, 44717-44718.

May 22: New Postal Products, 45035-45036.

May 23: New Postal Products, 45709-45710.

May 28: New Postal Products [2], 46178-46179, 46179-46180.

May 29: New Postal Products, 46427-46428.

May 30: New Postal Products, 46923-46924.

May 31: New Postal Products, 47185-47186.

June 3: New Postal Products, 47617-47618.

PROPOSED RULES

May 22: Periodic Reporting, 44951-44953.

May 28: Periodic Reporting, 46046-46049.

FINAL RULES

[None].

DMM Advisory

May 22: International Service Resumption Notice – effective May 24, 2024 [Haiti].

May 29: International Service Suspension Notice – effective May 31, 2024 [New Caledonia].

Postal Bulletin (PB 22651, May 30)

[The issue contained changes to domestic or international mailing standards or other notices relevant to commercial mail producers.]

USPS Industry Alerts

May 21, 2024

Postmaster General Congressional Letter Outlining Next Steps in Network Transformation

To further clarify the implementation plans of the Postal Service Mail Processing Facility Reviews, and continued activity on Regional Processing and Distribution Centers, Sorting and Delivery Centers, and Local Processing Centers, Postmaster General Louis DeJoy transmitted a letter yesterday addressed to Senator Gary Peters, Chairman, Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. The letter outlines the paused implementation status of the Mail Processing Facility Reviews, as well as the ongoing 2024 activities that will continue to advance and are part of the nearly $15.3 billion in committed self-funded investments. The letter can be found here: https://about.usps.com/newsroom/global/pdf/0520-pmg-dejoy-to-chairman-peters.pdf .

May 22, 2024

International Service Resumption Notice Effective May 24, 2024

Effective Friday, May 24, 2024, the Postal Service will resume acceptance of mail destined to the following: **Haiti**. This service resumption affects the following mail classes: Priority Mail Express International (PMEI), Priority Mail International (PMI), First-Class Mail International (FCMI), First-Class Package International Service (FCPIS), International Priority Airmail (IPA), International Surface Air Lift (ISAL), and M-Bag items. Please visit our International Service Alerts page for the most up to date information: https://about.usps.com/newsroom/service-alerts/international/?utm_source=residential&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=res_to_intl.

May 23, 2024

Executive Appointment – Margaret Pepe, Executive Director, Product Solutions

Margaret Pepe has been appointed to the position of Executive Director, Product Solutions. In this new position within the Customer and Marketing organization, Margaret will report directly to Steve Monteith, Chief Customer and Marketing Officer and Executive Vice President, and will lead, direct, and coordinate the activities of the Product Solutions group that consists of Election and Government Mail Services, Product Management, Commercial Product Payment and Policy, Product Classification, and the Pricing and Classification Service Center. In this role, Margaret is responsible for formulating key strategies and initiatives for products offered across the enterprise, including development of new products and programs that strengthen competitive positioning, meet customer needs, and generate revenue. She will be responsible for identifying and evaluating opportunities to create future solutions to grow and retain mail volume, protect revenue, and bridge the gap with external business customers. Margaret has over three decades of postal experience primarily in marketing and customer service. As Product Management executive director, she directed the strategic planning, product, and program management for the Mailing Services, Special Services, and New Solutions teams within Product Management including First-Class Mail and Marketing Mail, over 40 special services, and USPS promotions and incentives accounting for $52 billion in annual revenue. Throughout her career, Margaret has worked with the industry to develop and execute strategies that strengthen the value of mail, enable innovation, and adapt to changing marketplace needs. She has overseen the development of new programs, resources, and solutions designed to increase mail usage from businesses of all sizes such as mailing promotions and growth incentives. Margaret's commitment extends to educating the next generations of marketers on the value of mail and omni-channel campaigns through outreach and collaboration with colleges and educational organizations. She has previously served in managerial positions including Area Marketing Manager, Manager Retail and Post Office Operations, Manager Customer Outreach, and Manager Stamp Products. In 1993, Margaret joined the Postal Service as a distribution window clerk at the Ravena, NY Post Office. She is a graduate of the USPS Executive Foundations and Advanced Leadership programs and completed the Senior Executive Assessment Development Center program. She is also a certified Lean Six Sigma Green Belt.

May 23, 2024

Military Postal Service Agency (MPSA) DPO ZIP Code: 34060 – Mailing Services Resumed

Effective immediately: Temporary Suspension to DPO ZIP Code 34060 has been removed and mailing services will resume.

May 10, 2024

International Service Suspension Notice – Effective May 31, 2024

Effective May 31, 2024, the Postal Service will suspend international mail acceptance to New Caledonia until further notice due to unavailable transportation. Customers are asked to refrain from mailing items addressed to the following country, until further notice: New Caledonia. This service disruption affects Priority Mail Express International(PMEI), Priority Mail International (PMI), First-Class Mail International (FCMI), First-Class Package International Service (FCPIS), International Priority Airmail (IPA), and M-Bag items. Unless otherwise noted, service suspensions to a particular country do not affect delivery of military and diplomatic mail. For already deposited items, other than Global Express Guarantee (GXG), Postal Service International Service Center (ISC) employees will endorse the items as "Mail Service Suspended — Return to Sender" and then place them in the mail stream for return. According to DMM 604.9.2.3, customers are entitled to a full refund of their postage costs when service to the country of destination is suspended. The detailed procedures to obtain refunds for Retail Postage, eVS, PC Postage, and BMEU entered mail can be found through the following link: https://postalpro.usps.com/international-refunds. The Postal Service is closely monitoring the situation and will continue to update customers until the situation returns to normal. Please visit our International Service Alerts page for the most up to date information: https://about.usps.com/newsroom/service-alerts/international/?utm_source=residential&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=res_to_intl.

May 31, 2024

Mail Spoken Here – May 2024 Edition – Industry Engagement & Outreach Newsletter

Please enjoy the latest edition of Mail Spoken Here attached. The newsletter contains informative and important articles on the following topics: USPS is Delivering More Newspapers - Publishers want Dependable Service for their Subscribers; Executive Appointment – Margaret Pepe, Executive Director, Product Solutions; USPS Recommends new Prices for Parcel Select - No Increases are Planned for USPS Ground Advantage, Priority Mail and Priority Mail Express; Reminder - Registration Deadline - Mail Growth Incentives; Raising Awareness of Dog Bites - USPS is Gearing up for this Year's Campaign; Project Safe Delivery Goes Online - The Postal Inspection Service Website has a New Page; Here's how to Avoid Social Engineering Scams - Cybercriminals will try to Gain Your Trust to get What They Want; Coming in on a Wing and a Prayer - The First Scheduled Airmail Flight Occurred May 15, 1918; New Stamps - Release Date, Location Updates (USPS has Announced Dates and Locations for the Next Batch; Ansel Adams had an Eye for Nature - USPS will Feature the Photographer's Iconic Images of American Treasures); Mailers Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC); Upcoming Events; A few Fun Facts about June!; *Federal Register* Notices; Negotiated Service Agreements – Listing; The Latest *Postal Bulletin*s. Thank you for taking the time and we hope to see you all in Indianapolis for the National Postal Forum.

May 31, 2024

Business Customer Gateway eDoc Training Series – Intelligent Mail for Small Business Tool (IMsb)

The Postal Service is hosting bi-weekly webinars on utilizing the Business Customer Gateway (BCG) for electronic documentation (eDoc) and postage statement submission. The topics alternate between using the Business Customer Gateway (BCG) / Postal Wizard (PW) and Intelligent Mail for Small Business (IMsb) Tool applications. Learn how to eliminate hard copy postage statements and submit Full-Service mail! Software customers should work with their software provider to find eDoc solutions. As an additional tool to assist mailers with the conversion to Electronic Postage Statement submission, the Postal Service has published a video outlining how to use the Business Customer Gateway and Postal Wizard postage statement submission available on PostalPro: Industry Session: Business Customer Gateway and Postal Wizard Recording | PostalPro (usps.com). Also, a recording of the IMsb Tool session has been posted on PostalPro: Industry Session: Intelligent Mail Small Business (IMsb) Tool Recording | PostalPro (usps.com). Upcoming webinars: June 4, Intelligent Mail for Small Business Tool (IMsb). Join us for the next session – Business Customer Gateway (BCG)/ Postal Wizard (PW); June 18, Business Customer Gateway (BCG)/ Postal Wizard (PW); July 2, Intelligent Mail for Small Business Tool (IMsb). Join us for the next session – Intelligent Mail for Small Business Tool (IMsb) on Tuesday, June 2, 2024, at 1:00 PM EST. Meeting URL: https://usps.zoomgov.com/j/1603767418?pwd=TTFONWNVMXQ2UW1wcUVCcEt5WFllZz09; Meeting ID: 160 376 7418; Password: 996767. If requested, enter your name and email address; Enter meeting password: 996767. Join Audio by the options below: Call using Internet Audio; Dial: 1-855-860-4313, 1-678-317-3330 or 1-952-229-5070 & follow prompts. Note: Meeting links and presentations are also posted on PostalPro and can be found at Mailing Services | PostalPro (usps.com).

BRANN & ISAACSON
ATTORNEYS AND COUNSELORS AT LAW

The services of Brann & Isaacson are now available to provide legal advice to subscribers. The firm is the Mailers Hub recommended legal counsel for mail producers on legal issues, including tax, privacy, consumer protection, intellectual property, vendor contracts, and employment matters. As part of their subscription, Mailers Hub subscribers get an annual consultation (up to one hour) from Brann & Isaacson, and a reduced rate for additional legal assistance. The points of contact at Brann & Isaacson are: Martin I. Eisenstein; David Swetnam-Burland; Stacy O. Stitham; Jamie Szal. They can also be reached by phone at (207) 786-3566.

Calendar

To register for any Mailers Hub webinar, go to MailersHubWebinars.com

June 18 – ***Mailers Hub* Webinar**

July 9 – ***Mailers Hub* Webinar**

July 14-17 – NACUMS Educational Conference, Austin (TX)

July 30 – ***Mailers Hub* Webinar**

August 13-14 – MTAC Meeting, USPS Headquarters

August 20 – ***Mailers Hub* Webinar**

September 10-12 – Printing United Expo, Las Vegas (NV)

September 17 – ***Mailers Hub* Webinar**

October 1 – ***Mailers Hub* Webinar**

October 15 – ***Mailers Hub* Webinar**

October 22-23 – MTAC Meeting, USPS Headquarters

November 12 – ***Mailers Hub* Webinar**

December 3 – ***Mailers Hub* Webinar**

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