

## **Your Postal Podcast**

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Transcript

### **Intro, Richard Watkins**

Welcome to *Your Postal Podcast*. This is Richard Watkins with the Postal Service's office of Corporate Communications. In this edition, you'll hear about how a local Postmaster fought city hall on a Do-Not-Mail resolution. You'll also hear a report from the Postal Regulatory Commission's first public hearing on five-day delivery

**Watkins:** With looming deficits, Postal Service leadership believes five-day delivery to be one component to fiscal stability. The Postal Regulatory Commission is currently on a seven-city swing seeking public input. David Rupert files this report from Las Vegas.

**David Rupert:** Five Day delivery. Will it help the Postal Service's current financial woes and put it on the path to solvency into the future? What will be the impact on employees and customers? These questions and others are being tackled by the Postal Regulatory Commission, as they wrestle with the Postal Service's request to eliminate one day of delivery.

The PRC is having public hearings in seven cities: Las Vegas, Sacramento, Memphis, Chicago, Dallas, Rapid City, and Buffalo.

Commission Chairwoman Ruth Goldway explains the need for the hearings:

**Ruth Goldway:** We will begin to consider the possible changes to the Postal Service and the impact that could have on local communities and the mail itself."

**Rupert:** USPS Corporate Communication's representative Gerry McKiernan says initial support is strong, citing the results from one Rasmussen and two Gallup polls.

**Gerry McKiernan:** 68 to 71 percent of the America people favor this if it means a stronger Postal Service for the future and that's what this plan is all about.

**Rupert:** Goldway talked about who the proposal will affect: In essence, everyone

**Goldway:** In view of the wide-spread impact this proposal will have, it will affect every citizen and every business in the United States."

**Rupert:** The hearings take public comments, as well as testimony from the Postal Service, mailers and employee groups.

**Goldway:** During the process, mail users and interested members of the public, may offer supporting, or opposing views, both informally, and as part of the more formal, technical presentation.

**Rupert:** During the Las Vegas hearing, there were a variety of viewpoints from mailers

**Postal Solutions testimony:** Under the current USPS proposed changes, USPS Post Office box customers will continue to receive Saturday delivery service, while CMRAs will not receive any mail for their customers.

**Medco Testimony:** Any reduction in postal delivery days, without a corresponding improvement in service, will ultimately lead to delays in Medco receiving the orders and our patients receiving their medications.

**Southwest Gas testimony:** With this change, Southwest gas will need to modify our internal business processes to accommodate the change in mail service. At this time we don't anticipate this to be a major change

**Rupert:** USPS Vice President of Sales, Susan Plonkey was hand, and after the hearing was asked about the impact on employees

**Susan Plonkey:** "Letter carriers won't be delivering mail on Saturday. We'll still have Post Offices open. We'll still be putting up box mail. If you're working in retail on Saturdays, that part's remaining unchanged. We believe that since a significant of our employees are eligible for retirement in the next four years, that we can take care of most of our employee needs through attrition."

**Rupert:** Plonkey says five-day -- and other major changes -- are important, not just for the current fiscal crisis, but for the future.

**Plonkey:** "This is something we feel we need to do to keep a viable postal service into the future. If we don't take some major steps over the next few years, the business model we have currently just isn't sustainable."

### **(Do-Not-Mail Segment)**

**Watkins:** Do-Not-Mail advocates tout environmental concerns in their push to allow individuals to opt out of mailings, but there's a much bigger picture to consider. Lisa Nystuen reports on how one Postmaster and postal mailers stopped a local resolution with a campaign of truth.

**Lisa Nystuen:** When the Spokane's elected leaders considered a resolution in support of a Do Not Mail list, Spokane Postmaster Karen Fairlee and members of the local mailing industry quickly put together a fact-based informational campaign focused on the devastating impact such a list would have on the state and local economy. During her

testimony in front of the City Council, Fairlee and local business owners shared the many positive impacts of direct mail.

**Karen Fairley:** Local facts are important for this issue. In Washington State, 5,000 small businesses rely on Direct Mail advertising. Direct Mail industry in this state alone employs over 16,000 people in over 16.5 million in revenue for those small businesses. Mass produced pieces of mail actually come from tree farms. Privately owned forest land is good for the environment. They plant almost 2 million trees a day in this country. And what we found in Spokane is that waste mail doesn't end up in landfills. That we have a waste energy plant, where products where the paper products are taken and burned and turned into electricity for our communities.

**Nystuen:** Ray Layton of Layton Printing had this to say on behalf of local businesses.

**Ray Layton:** When you consider your vote on this issue, Please be aware that most of the emphasis about the talks about "Do Not Mail" considers national mailings, banks, oil, gas corporations, lending institutions. The fact of the matter is that small businesses use direct mail almost exclusively to attract neighbors into its doors. It is the locally owned corner florist shop, the car repair shop, the hair stylist, the neighborhood grocery store or drug store that make up the use of small mailings.

**Nystuen:** After much discussion, well into the evening of May 3, the resolution was defeated by a vote of 6-1. Some city council members admitted that prior to the meeting they had planned to vote "for" the resolution. The Spokane experience wasn't the first the mailing community has met such challenges..., nor will it be the last. However, it does demonstrate how a quick, well organized informational campaign focused on facts and local impacts can be a stubborn defense to such a resolution. To learn more about the Postal Services green efforts and the positive impact of mail on the environment, go online to [www.usps.gov/green](http://www.usps.gov/green).

### **(Postal Service Headlines Segment)**

**Watkins:** And now, here's a brief rundown of Postal Service headlines...

Significant revenue and volume losses continue for the Postal Service. The USPS posted a net loss of \$1.9 billion on declining volumes of 88.1 billion mailpieces for the six months that ended March 31.

In discussing the results, Postmaster General Jack Potter reinforced the need for legislative and regulatory changes necessary to maintain a viable Postal Service. Two changes could save the Postal Service more than \$8.5 billion in the first full year they're implemented: restructuring the prepayment of retiree health benefit payments and eliminating one day of delivery service per week.

These and other proposals by the Postal Service are presented in an action plan for the next decade, *Ensuring a Viable Postal Service for America*.

Despite the ongoing financial challenges, Mr. Potter commended employees for continuing to take costs out of the system and maintaining high rates of customer service.

**Watkins:** Thank you for listening to Your Postal Podcast. Now, we'd like to hear from you. Send your story ideas and feedback to [yourpostalpodcast@usps.com](mailto:yourpostalpodcast@usps.com). A production of Western Area Corporate Communications. Copyright 2010, all rights reserved.