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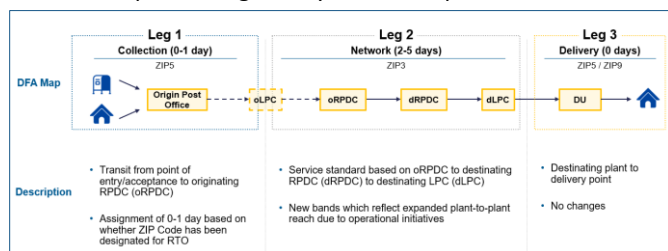
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## Your Experience May Will Vary – Commentary

It should finally be clear to all: the presumption that what the Postal Service considers standards for service in any way relates to the service that the average person will experience is completely wrong.

As illustrated in its recent filing with the Postal Regulatory Commission, the USPS now segments its calculation of service into three pieces: from the sender to the origin processing facility, between processing facilities, and from the destination processing facility to the recipient.



"Leg 1," as it's called, is one or two days depending on whether the post office of mailing is within or outside a 50-mile range from the originating regional processing and distribution center. However, in the agency's calculation, the two days applicable to the distant offices aren't counted as two – one day is considered "day 0," thus avoiding any negative impact on the days the USPS gives itself to provide service under its arbitrary standards.

"Leg 2," the travel between RPDCs and between the destination RPDC and the local processing center serving the recipient's post office, is based on distance. However, under the agency's latest revised service standards, that distance is now greater because of earlier dispatch from origin (since only mail within 50 miles needs to be processed before dispatch). This affords the USPS with more time to meet this portion of its 2-, 3-, 4-, or 5-day standard.

Finally, for "Leg 3," delivery to the addressee is assumed to be on the same day as that mail is sent from the destination LPC to the delivery unit, regardless of the route it takes or how far the delivery office may be from the LPC.

So, overall, the Postal Service *assumes* one day for "Legs" 1 and 3, but *measures* only "Leg 2" – the time it's allowed itself

to move mail from receipt at the origin RPDC to dispatch from the destinating LPC. The resulting number, allegedly a "service standard," is in no way the *actual* time it takes for mail to travel from the sender to the recipient.

As a result, even if the true travel time between sender and recipient is much longer, the Postal Service can claim it met the published "standard" for 2-, 3-, 4-, or 5-day service it set for itself, mostly because the USPS chooses to simply not count the additional days actually taken.

For example, an item mailed on Saturday morning at a post office that's beyond the 50-mile range from the RPDC won't leave that office until Monday morning (there's no Saturday afternoon collection). Presumably, the item would be processed at the origin RPDC on Monday and travel to the destination RPDC and LPC, arriving according to plan in five days, i.e., on Saturday. Depending on the exact arrival time of the item at the destinating LPC, it may miss the LPC's early Saturday morning dispatches to delivery units. If the LPC doesn't operate late Saturday and/or on Sunday, the item may not be sent to the delivery office until Monday. And, under the Postal Service's calculations, Sundays don't count.

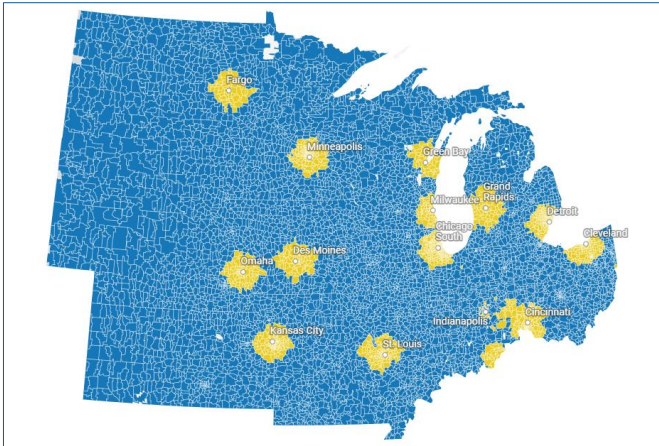
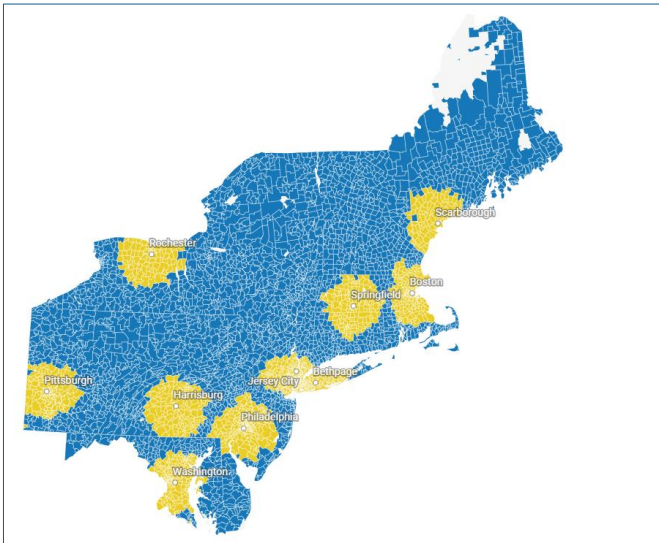
However, there's another wrinkle: if the LPC doesn't send mail directly to the delivery office – if it's 150 miles away, for example – the mail for that delivery unit may go by way of a sort and delivery center where it's cross-docked to the delivery office. In turn, the travel time to such a distant delivery unit may cause the item to not arrive in time for same day delivery, unless the dispatch from the S&DC to that delivery unit leaves very early or the carriers' start times aren't until late in the morning. Possibly, therefore, in the case of such a remote delivery unit, the item may not be available for delivery until Tuesday.

Of course, according to the Postal Service, the item would have been delivered "on time" based on how it counts days and its self-defined five-day standard, but for the sender and recipient, the item took at least ten days to be delivered. Though the USPS would crow about how it met its standard, but the experience of the ratepaying customers would have been significantly different; they don't care about how the Postal Service counts, but they do care about real service.

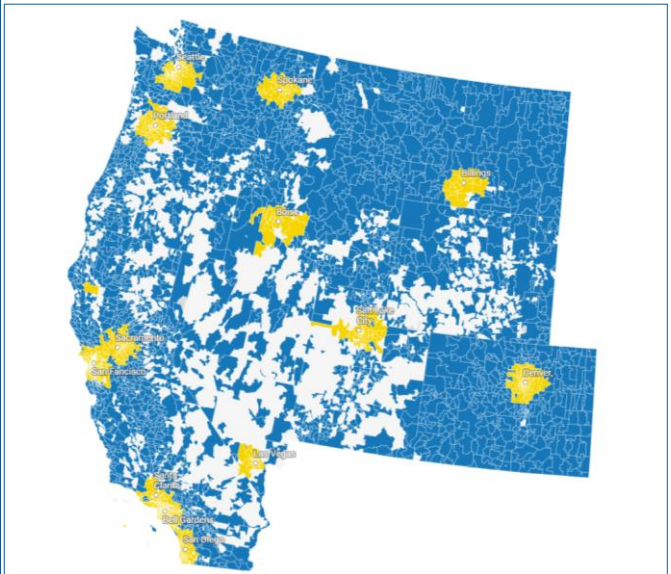
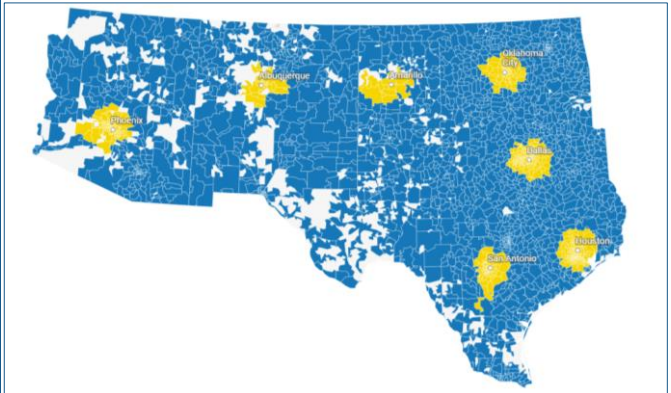
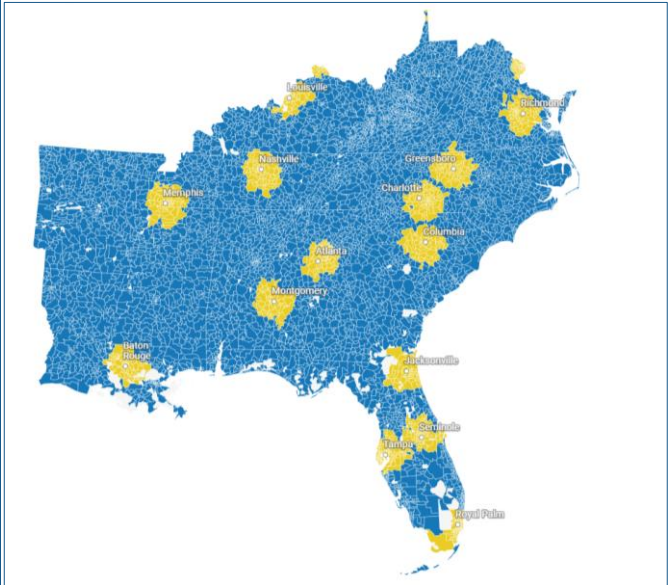
## Illustrating the Impact

In an October 22 post, the *Save the Post Office* website provided “finders” that allow readers to determine whether a five-digit ZIP Code is among the thousands where the Postal Service is eliminating afternoon collections, and the service standards that will apply to mail originating in that location and sent to any other three-digit ZIP Code area.

The posting included a link to five detailed interactive maps (<https://www.savethepostoffice.com/regional-transportation-optimization-maps/>) where users could find a ZIP Code, determine its local RPDC, the distance to it, whether the ZIP Code is impacted by the service reduction, and the area’s population and percent that’s rural. The copies of the maps below are not interactive but do illustrate the swaths of impacted post offices (blue) compared to the unimpacted islands around the regional processing and distribution centers (yellow); non-delivery areas are white.



According to *Save the Post Office*, the affected post offices serve “almost half the country’s population” and mostly rural areas. In the view of the USPS, it’s inefficient to send trucks to such post offices, i.e., those more than fifty miles from an RPDC, because the volume of mail those offices generate is too little to warrant the cost of collecting it. The Postmaster General has argued that such inequality is a “price that has to be paid” if the USPS is to become “self-sustaining.”



The Postal Service justifies its proposal to reduce service as a measure to reduce transportation costs and make the collection/processing/delivery network more “efficient,” but it adds at least another day to delivery times for mail deposited at any of the over 23,400 post office being impacted.



The site also provided maps illustrating how the service standards have changed, from 2021 through the implementation of the current USPS proposal. Clearly visible is the sheep-and-goats distinction that will be made under the differentiation in service for post offices inside or outside fifty miles of the local RPDC. As *Save the Post Office* explained:

“The first map (Pre-DFA) shows the service standards from before October 2021. At the time, there was a 2-day standard for local mail, and the rest of the country fell under a 3-day standard. In October 2021, the Postal Service revised the standards – one of the →

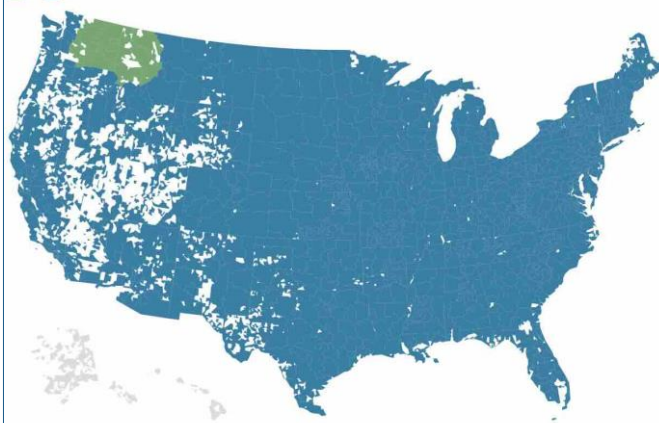
first initiatives of the Delivering for America plan – and most of the 3-day band became 4-day and 5-day, as seen in the ‘Current’ map.

“Pasco is 141 miles from the RPDC in Spokane, so it falls under the RTO initiative. In the map for presort mail, the bands for 2, 3 and 4-day mail will each expand, and the 5-day band will become smaller. For single-piece mail, the 2-day band will become 3, the 3-day will become 4, and the 4-day will become 5.

“The presort map also applies to all the post offices within 50 miles of the Seattle RPDC (non-RTO). The single-piece map applies to all the offices outside of the 50 mile radius (RTO).”

**Pasco WA 993: Pre DFA**

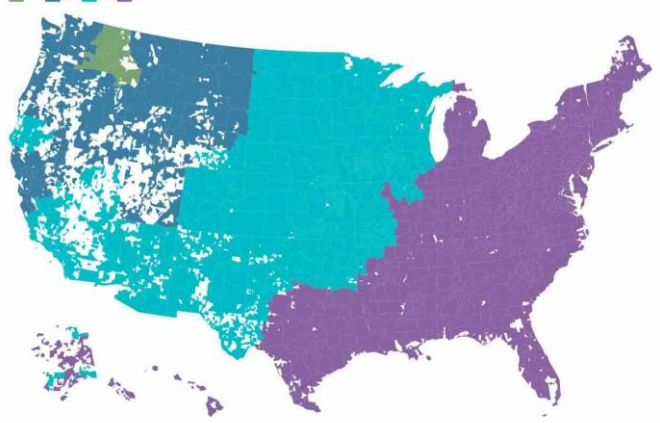
Service Standards for Originating Mail (Days)  
■ 2 ■ 3



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**Pasco WA 993: Current**

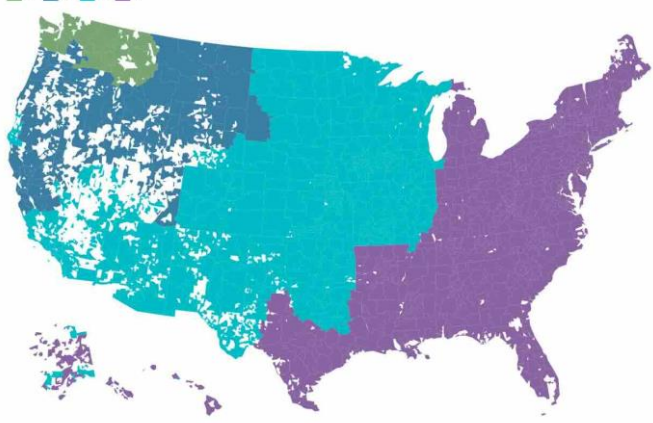
Service Standards for Originating Mail (Days)  
■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5



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**Pasco WA 993: Presort Proposed**

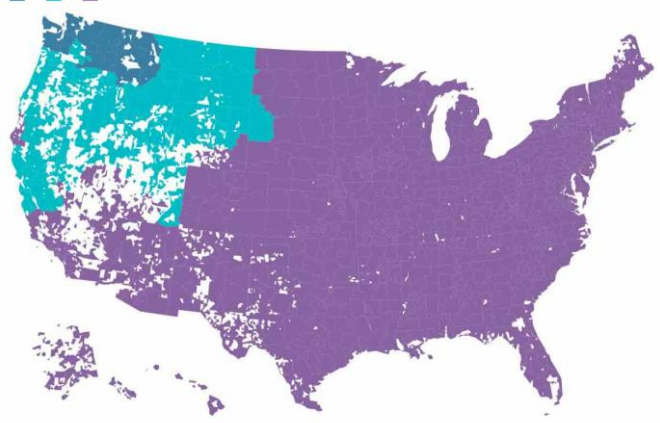
Service Standards for Originating Mail (Days)  
■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5



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**Pasco WA 993: Single-Piece Proposed**

Service Standards for Originating Mail (Days)  
■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5



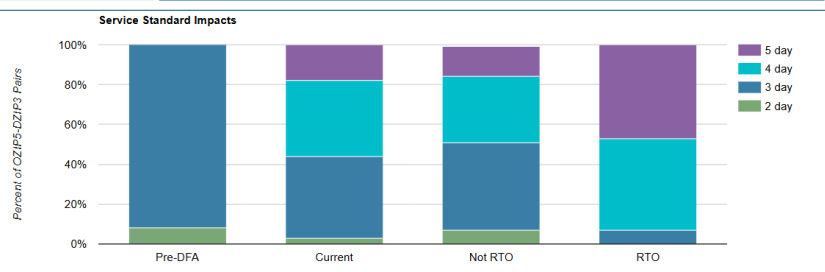
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The website added:

“Another way to view the scope of the proposed changes is by examining the distribution of origin-destination (OD) pairs by service standards. This chart [right] shows the percent of OD pairs for each service standard. Before DFA, over 90 percent of the OD pairs were subject to a 3-day standard. With DFA, the number of 2-day pairs decreased, and about half of the 3-day pairs became 4-day and 5-day.

“Under the proposal, the percent of 2-day pairs will increase for non-RTO offices, and the number of 5-day pairs will decrease. For the RTO offices, on the other hand, over 90 percent of the OD pairs will be subject to a 4-day and 5-day standard.”

The site’s illustrations support the notion that the USPS proposal can benefit customers close to an RPDC but, for the majority of post offices, their customers can only take comfort that their loss of service is a “price that has to be paid.”



## California ... There They Go (Again)

Unlike Las Vegas (at least in the old commercials), what happens in Sacramento almost never stays in Sacramento. So it's important for mailers to keep an eye on legal goings-on in the Golden State. Here is a quick update on recent developments that may be relevant to you or the businesses with which you work.

**SB 1096: Disclosure requirement for printed solicitations for financial products or services.** The recent passage of SB 1096 has caused some confusion. It will introduce in January 2025 a new requirement of a disclosure statement in at least 18-point bold type that must appear in certain printed solicitations *and* mandates that the same disclosure must appear in at least 16-point bold type on the front of the enclosing envelope.

The key thing to note is that this disclosure requirement is limited to solicitations for *financial products or services*.

The new provision applies to "covered persons" and entities acting on their behalf who send solicitations "to a consumer for a financial product or service." It borrows the definition of "covered person" from the California Financial Code, which defines "covered person" as a person that sells financial products or services to consumers.

This provision does *not*, therefore, require a disclosure in *all* solicitations for the sale of goods and services.

For print solicitations for financial products, the new law does apply to "an advertisement or marketing communication through writing or graphics that is directed to, or likely to give the impression of being directed to, an individually identified person, residence, or business location." It does not apply to mass advertisements, including catalogs, radio or television ads, or websites "if that communication is not directed to, or is not likely to give the impression of being directed to, an individually identified person, residence, or business location." If you work with financial service providers, you should make sure they are working to comply with this statute starting next year.

**SB 478: No "hidden fees" in pricing.** Although less directly relevant to printers and mailers, it is worth flagging a second change in the same California statute, one that went into effect in July 2024. That is the new prohibition on "hidden fees" in advertised prices.

The statute provides, in broad terms, that the advertised, displayed, or offered price of any good or service must include "all mandatory fees or charges" except for transaction taxes or government fees or postage or carriage charges reasonably and actually incurred to ship a physical good to a consumer.

To the extent mailed advertisements state prices for goods or services to California consumers, it would appear those statements would be covered by this new provision and would have to state the actual price the consumer would pay (except for tax and shipping).

While there is no reason to believe a mailer or printer could be held liable for a violation of this provision, compliance for many retailers is not as simple as the California legislature seems to imagine. So it is possible this statute will lead to changes in the form or content of marketing materials they mail to consumers.

This article was produced exclusively for Mailers Hub by David Swetnam-Burland of Brann & Isaacson.

Brann & Isaacson is a boutique law firm that represents large and small online and multichannel companies, printers, commercial mail producers, and IT service providers located across the country. The firm advises companies of all sizes, including many in the Internet Retailer's Top 500 Guide. 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.

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## Representatives Complain to PMG About Service

To Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, complaints from Congress about service may be simply a nuisance to be dealt with by his staff. Nonetheless, that such complaints continue indicates a growing level of discontent on The Hill about his decisions and their effect on the service being rendered by the USPS. The latest example is an October 21 letter from Rep. Mark Pocan (WI 2<sup>nd</sup>) and 26 colleagues, the text of which is reprinted below in its entirety (the highlights are ours).

"We are writing to you with serious concerns regarding the deterioration of service at the United States Postal Service (USPS) under your leadership and the impacts this has had on our constituents. The policies implemented under your tenure have led to persistent mail delays, higher prices, a strained postal workforce, and a lack of confidence among the American people in the Postal Service's ability to perform its most basic responsibility of mail delivery. Despite repeated attempts to get more clarity from you regarding your plans to restore the quality of service, we still only have more questions than answers.

"We frequently hear from our constituents about problems they are experiencing with the Postal Service, including delays in

delivery for everyday necessities including prescription medication, social security checks, business documents, bills, and other important pieces of mail. These challenges stem from your Delivering for America plan which includes the consolidation of processing facilities and the rollout of the Local Transportation Optimization (LTO) plan, which will cause further delivery delays for rural residents and others living 25-50 miles from a processing center. This change in delivery standards will have widespread negative consequences, but rural communities in particular will be most affected.

"As you are aware, this new delivery plan was initially piloted in Green Bay, WI, and Richmond, VA, and despite these locations now ranking among the lowest in the nation for on-time delivery, they are being used as models for the broader national implementation of this policy. When questioned at a recent House Appropriations Committee hearing about why you would expand this program after seeing how poorly it worked in Wisconsin, you responded, 'You know, the first rockets that went to the moon blew up.' Your response demonstrates a lack of concern for our constituents and their livelihoods, as the Department continues to pursue cost savings no matter the consequences.

“Unfortunately, we’ve already seen that our rural communities are among the hardest hit by your cost-saving initiatives. Your plans to implement these reduced delivery standards at 180 additional processing centers over the coming months will only exacerbate the delays that our rural constituents are already experiencing, many of whom rely on the Postal Service for basic needs. While we agree with your decision to pause the consolidation of processing facilities and the further rollout of these reduced rural delivery standards until after the election, we strongly urge that these measures be permanently halted until the agency can fully resolve the ongoing issues with on-time delivery.

“The primary role of the USPS is to offer reliable and affordable mail and package delivery to all addresses in the United States, serving both urban and rural areas. For generations, Americans have relied on the Postal Service as a cornerstone of communication and commerce. Its significance cannot be overstated, and any disruptions directly impact millions who depend on consistent, timely service. Unfortunately, under your leadership we have seen reductions in standards that are causing genuine harm to our constituents. We also acknowledge that this is no fault of our hard-working postal workers who simply want to be able to do their jobs and serve their communities to the best of their ability, but are facing workforce shortages, longer hours, and insufficient pay.

“To that end, we strongly urge you to reverse course on the Delivering for America plan, including by halting indefinitely any further

consolidation of processing centers and the planned national implementation of the Local Transportation Optimization initiative, which will disproportionately impact rural residents. These policies are already causing harm, and if you continue to move forward, we fear the impacts on our constituents will only worsen.

“Thank you for your time and consideration, and we look forward to your response.”

Co-signing the letter were Reps. Gwen Moore (WI 4<sup>th</sup>), Betty McCollum (MN 4<sup>th</sup>), Rashida Tlaib (MI 12<sup>th</sup>), Timothy Kennedy (NY 26<sup>th</sup>), Katie Porter (CA 47<sup>th</sup>), Delia Ramirez (IL 3<sup>rd</sup>), Bonnie Watson Coleman (NJ 12<sup>th</sup>), Barbara Lee (CA 12<sup>th</sup>), Raul Grijalva (AZ 7<sup>th</sup>), Emanuel Cleaver II (MO 5<sup>th</sup>), Jared Huffman (CA 2<sup>nd</sup>), Juan Vargas (CA 52<sup>nd</sup>), Susan Wild (PA 7<sup>th</sup>), Janice Schakowsky (IL 9<sup>th</sup>), Shri Thanedar (MI 13<sup>th</sup>), Steve Cohen (TN 9<sup>th</sup>), Jim Costa (CA 21<sup>st</sup>), Rick Larsen (WA 2<sup>nd</sup>), Chellie Pingree (ME 1<sup>st</sup>), Chris Deluzio (PA 17<sup>th</sup>), Pramila Jayapal (WA 7<sup>th</sup>), Judy Chu (CA 28<sup>th</sup>), Cori Bush (MO 1<sup>st</sup>), Sean Casten (IL 6<sup>th</sup>), Kweisi Mfume (MD 7<sup>th</sup>), and Vicente Gonzales (TX 34<sup>th</sup>).

Given tomorrow’s election and the potential for a different political landscape in January, DeJoy may be assuming that he can ignore the letters he’s received from members of Congress. The wisdom of such an assumption may become apparent next year.

## Why Using Scent Can Save You 4% On Postage in 2025

Did you know that the sense of smell is linked to the brain’s systems that evoke emotions and memory more directly than any other sensory system? For marketers, this means that scent can be used to influence emotions and purchasing intent, which in turn boosts sales.

For 2025, the USPS is offering a **4% postage discount** if you integrate scent into your mail pieces. This allows you to drive additional sales while saving money on postage. The USPS’s goal with this promotion is to encourage sensory engagement with physical mail pieces. Direct mail is unique in its ability to provide a tactile experience – a feature no other marketing channel can match!

### Interesting Scent Facts

- 75% of our daily emotions are influenced by smell.
- 81% of consumers prefer a product they can smell and touch over one they can only see.
- 65% of consumers can remember a scent-associated memory even a year later.
- 90% say scented ads stand out from the clutter.
- 67% find fragrance print ads fun.
- 80% of consumers interact with fragrance samples.

### How Can You Add Scent?

Companies like [Scentisphere](#) make it easy to add scent to direct mail. Here are a few options:

- **Rub’nSmell®**: A scented varnish that prints like a fifth color directly on the piece, allowing for multiple fragrances on one page. Approved for inside and outside mail use.
- **Scent A Peel® Labels**: Transparent, multi-ply labels that let consumers lift and smell the fragrance. Approved for outside mail application.
- **Scent A Coat®**: An ambient coating that doesn’t require rubbing activation, best used inside an envelope.

The most common choice is Rub’nSmell. Whichever option you choose, a clear call to action to “rub,” “lift,” or “sniff”

will enhance engagement. Adding scents not only qualifies you for the USPS’s 4% postage discount in 2025 but also creates a fun experience for your customers.

### Expected Results

- A campaign using Rub’nSmell on coupons outperformed expectations by 50%.
- Scented Business Reply Card inserts saw a 0.79% response rate, 68% higher than expected.
- Overall, a scented campaign more than doubled sales.
- A credit card issuer saw response rate lifts of 12% to 50%, depending on the scent and imagery combination.

### Exploring Fragrance Options

If you’re unsure which scent to choose, Nature’s Garden offers a variety of fragrance options to inspire you. USPS’s 2025 Tactile, Sensory, & Interactive promotion will save you 4% on postage if you add scent to your direct mail.

For those looking for alternatives, this promotion also offers discounts for using:

- **Specialty Inks**: Conductive, thermochromic, photochromic, optically variable, piezochromic, and hydrochromic inks qualify, each offering unique and interactive mail experiences.
- **Sensory Treatments**: Use tactile coatings, raised UV, embossing, or debossing, along with specialty papers for a memorable experience.
- **Interactive Elements**: Pop-ups, infinite folds, and 3D elements add curiosity and engagement to your mail.

Your mail pieces must be submitted to the USPS TSI Promotion Office for review at least a week before mailing. Work with your mail service provider to start your campaign and save 4% on postage!

This article was provided by long-time colleague Summer Gould, formerly of Eye/Comm, now an account executive with Neyenesch Printers, San Diego (CA). She may be contacted at [summer@neyenesch.com](mailto:summer@neyenesch.com).



# OIG Finds New Vehicle Delivery Lagging Projections

The Postal Service has embarked on a much-needed renewal of its delivery fleet, replacing its more-than-aged Long Life Vehicles with a mix of conventionally- and electric-powered delivery vehicles. However, the process has not gone without issues, as was indicated by the USPS Office of Inspector General in an audit report, *Fleet Modernization: Delivery Vehicle Acquisition Status*, released October 3.

## Background

The OIG noted that the Postal Service’s delivery fleet

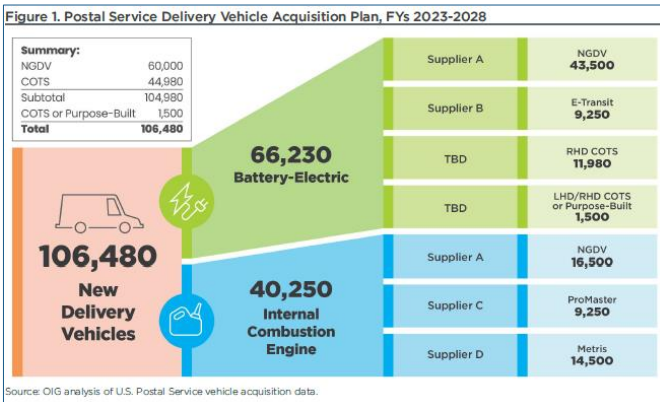
“... comprises over 227,000 vehicles of varying makes and models (see Table 1), with the backbone being ‘purpose-built’ Long Life Vehicles (LLV).

Table 1. Postal Service Vehicle Fleet, FY 2023	
Vehicle Type	Quantity
LLV	130,113
Flex Fuel Vehicles (FFV)	19,148
ProMaster	27,511
Metris	39,940
1/2 Ton - Other <sup>a</sup>	3,910
1 Ton - Other <sup>b</sup>	26
2 Ton <sup>b</sup>	7,337
Total	227,985

Source: U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) analysis of Postal Service data from Solution for Enterprise Asset Management (SEAM) extracted on January 2, 2024.  
<sup>a</sup> For example, minivans.  
<sup>b</sup> For example, step vans or trucks.

“The current condition of this fleet, however, is concerning as the majority of LLVs and FFVs are over their expected service life of 24 years, making them expensive to maintain and operate. The Postal Service spent about \$745 million on related maintenance costs in fiscal year (FY) 2023, with nearly half of the vehicles requiring more than \$4,500 each in repairs or other maintenance. Many of these vehicles lack modern safety and operational features, such as airbags, traction control, collision avoidance systems, and air conditioning. ...

“The current plan is to acquire 106,480 new delivery vehicles between FYs 2023-2028, which includes a mix of different engine types, driver-side configurations, suppliers, and production methods ... . Figure 1 shows that, as of June 2024, over half of the vehicles (66,230) will be battery electric vehicles (BEV), and at least 60,000 will be purpose-built Next Generation Delivery Vehicles (NGDV). ...



“As of June 2024, the Postal Service has contractual agreements with four different vehicle suppliers that account for 93,000 (87%)

of the expected new vehicles. Suppliers for the remaining 13,480 vehicles planned between FYs 2025-2028 have yet to be determined, with Postal Service officials estimating that the specific suppliers and vehicle types will be selected in early FY 2025.

“The total investment in delivery fleet modernization, including vehicles and charging infrastructure, is estimated to be \$9.6 billion, which includes \$3 billion in electric vehicle and infrastructure-related federal funding. ...”

## Finding

### “Progress and Challenges with Delivery Vehicle Acquisitions.

“The Postal Service acquired over 22,500 new delivery vehicles between March 2023 and June 2024 as part of its current acquisition plan. Almost all these vehicles (21,405 or 95%) were COTS ICE [internal combustion engine] vehicles. The total quantity of vehicles acquired during the period was 1% less than its current plans, but 23% less than the original plans contained within the various vehicle supplier contracts.

Table 4. Delivery Vehicle Acquisitions, March 2023-June 2024					
Vehicle Type	Quantity Acquired	Current Plan	Difference (Acquired vs. Current Plan)	Original Plan	Difference (Acquired vs. Original Plan)
LHD COTS ICE - ProMaster	7,403	6,606	797 (▲12%)	6,752	651 (▲10%)
RHD COTS ICE - Metris	14,002	14,500	-498 (▼3%)	14,500	-498 (▼3%)
LHD COTS BEV - E-Transit	1,076	1,701	-625 (▼37%)	4,800	-3,724 (▼78%)
RHD Purpose-built BEV and ICE - NGDV <sup>a</sup>	28	28	0 (0%)	3,051	-3,023 (▼99%)
Total	22,509	22,835	-326 (▼1%)	29,103	-6,594 (▼23%)

Source: OIG analysis of Postal Service documentation associated with current acquisition plan.  
<sup>a</sup> Twelve of these are training vehicles - six BEV and six ICE.

“The overall acquisition of COTS ICE vehicles was better when compared to the COTS BEVs and NGDVs. Vehicle acquisitions were either below current or original plans for three of the four vehicle types – Metris, E-Transit, and NGDVs.

“Acquisition delays were relatively unique to each vehicle type, particularly in terms of their timing, duration, and causes. ...

“Throughout these various design, production, transportation, and facility preparedness issues, the Postal Service periodically updated acquisition quantity and delivery schedules. While these periodic updates and ongoing collaboration between the Postal Service and the suppliers help promote more timely and representative projections, acquisition delays continue to put the timelines for vehicle-related financial and operational targets at risk. Delays will hinder the Postal Service’s ability to realize the cost saving targets as outlined in its original plans, particularly for its BEVs and NGDVs ... :

- “E-Transits: We estimate these delays would postpone projected cost savings of \$14,144,139 in FY 2024 based on the targets as outlined in the Postal Service’s November 2022 Decision Analysis Report (DAR) request.
- “NGDVs: We estimate these delays would postpone projected cost savings of \$63,700,515 between FYs 2024-2025 based on the targets as outlined in the Postal Service’s March 2022 NGDV DAR modification request.”

The OIG offered one recommendation, that the USPS

“... develop an approach for including pertinent financial (i.e., costs and savings) and sustainability impact data in its *Vehicle Acquisition Strategy* and related contingencies.”

The OIG noted that management disagreed with both the finding and the recommendation, claiming the “delayed financial savings ... would be closer to \$2.5 million and not \$77 million,” and asserting that the USPS “already implemented processes to include pertinent financial and sustainability impact data in their *Vehicle Acquisition Strategy*.” Just the same, delivery of the new vehicles still isn’t on schedule.

## OIG Examines Processes for Mitigating Mail Theft, Credit Card Controls

At the end of October, the USPS Office of Inspector General released a pair of audit reports focused on internal Postal Service practices.

### Internal mail theft

In *Mitigating Internal Mail Theft*, released October 30, the OIG stated that

“Internal mail theft continues to occur at mail processing plants and delivery units across the nation due to employee access to mail and packages that may contain credit cards, checks, cash, gift cards, narcotics, high value articles, and other sensitive items. ...

- **“Finding #1: Lack of Management Oversight on the Workroom Floor.** We found opportunities for the Postal Service to address internal control weaknesses to help decrease internal mail theft in processing facilities nationwide. Specifically, based on a review of closed internal mail theft investigations, we determined that postal employees used personal belongings brought onto the workroom floor at processing facilities nationwide to conceal stolen mail and packages. During our site observations, we also saw that postal employees were bringing personal belongings onto the workroom floor in processing facilities, which increases the risk of and provides opportunity for internal mail theft. ...

“Postal Service Headquarters policy states employees must not place mail in their clothing, lockers, desk, or in any other personal belongings. Additionally, some divisions and processing facilities have policies in place that restrict personal belongings on the workroom floor. Lastly, industry best practices published by the Postal Inspection Service recommend prohibiting employees from taking personal items into the main workspace. ...

“Regardless of these policies and practices, internal mail theft continued because Postal Service Headquarters officials did not establish a nationwide policy to restrict personal belongings on the workroom floor. Specifically, according to headquarters officials, division management is responsible for developing policy restricting employees’ personal belongings in their divisions. Furthermore, division management stated each processing facility manager is responsible for developing policy at their facility. ...

“While most processing facilities in our sample had policies restricting personal belongings on the workroom floor, managers and supervisors did not adhere to those policies and best practices. ...

- **“Finding #2: Lack of ISIP [integrated security and investigative platform] Camera Visibility.** Postal Inspection Service officials did not monitor the operational status of ISIP cameras that are managed in a remotely accessible video management system. ...
- “Postal Inspection Service officials stated they do not actively monitor the operational status of ISIP cameras; they are only aware of non-functioning cameras if reported by criminal investigators accessing the system. Additionally, Postal Inspection Service management shared that ISIP cameras typically become non-operational due to failures with switches, servers, or cables; however, they do not track the reasons for failure. ...”

The OIG offered four recommendations:

- “... develop and distribute nationwide policy that addresses personal belongings on the workroom floor.
- “... develop periodic internal mail theft awareness training for all employees assigned to mail processing facilities, including new acting or permanent supervisors.
- “... identify all cameras not functioning and develop a plan to restore them to operational status.
- “... develop and implement a strategic, nationwide plan that includes continuous monitoring of the operational status of cameras and diagnosing and addressing camera failures timely.”

USPS management disagreed with both findings and agreed only partially to the recommendations.

### Controls over purchase cards

In the second report, *Controls Over Purchase Card Facility Repairs*, released October 31, the OIG stated

“The US Postal Service uses expense purchase cards, which allow Facility and Architect Engineers, also known as project managers (PM), to make local purchases for operational needs. During fiscal years 2021 to 2023, the Postal Service paid approximately \$257.6 million in expense purchase card payments to vendors.”

- **“Finding #1: Adherence to Document Retention Policies.** We found that CCAOs [credit card approving officials] and PMs [postmasters] adhered to Postal Service policies and procedures related to maintaining supporting documentation as verification for transactions for roughly 71% of the transactions we reviewed ...

“The inconsistent record retention occurred because some CCAOs stated they were unaware of the policy to retain documents. Additionally, the Postal Service lacked guidance directing PMs to maintain supporting documents in a centralized, digital location for clear, consistent access. ...

“Due to these weaknesses, we estimate the Postal Service paid approximately \$757,000 in unsupported questioned costs related to the transactions we reviewed.

- **“Finding #2: Opportunities Exist to Enhance Expense Purchase Card Controls.** We found opportunities for the Postal Service to ensure facility repair transactions complied with the single purchase card spending limit and split payment policies and procedures. ... We identified a small number of split purchases as well as instances where the Postal Service consolidated payments (batched) to contractors, both of which occurred due to ambiguous or missing policy guidance. ...

“Overall, improvements could be made to strengthen the Postal Service’s policies around identifying and consolidating similar repairs and limiting payment batching. Although we identified a small number of split purchases, the underlying control weaknesses leaves the Postal Service vulnerable to undetected split payments, which circumvent internal controls associated with contracting.”

The OIG offered four recommendations:

- “... reiterate policy requiring project managers to transfer expense purchase card supporting documents to credit card approving officials, and for credit card approving officials to maintain the supporting documents for the duration of the retention period.
- “... create a centralized, electronic repository for storing facility repair supporting documentation.
- “... establish guidelines and best practices to require project managers to identify and combine related service ticket requests and solicit contracts for projects that exceed expense purchase card authority threshold.
- “... establish guidelines and controls to monitor the use of batch payments.

The OIG noted that

“Management agreed with the [first] finding and recommendations 1 and 2 but disagreed with the monetary impact. ... Management disagreed with the [second] finding and recommendation 3 but agreed with recommendation 4.”

As in many previous audits, the problems the OIG found could be traced to fundamental failures that should not have occurred: inadequate guidance by senior officials and a lack of training for the responsible managers and postmasters.

## All the Official Stuff

### Federal Register

#### Postal Service

##### NOTICES

**October 22:** Addition of New Market Dominant Product: “Connect Local Mail,” 84405-84406.

**October 24:** Product Change [38]: Priority Mail Express, Priority Mail, and USPS Ground Advantage Negotiated Service Agreement [24], 84940-84941, 84941, 84941, 84941, 84941, 84942, 84942, 84942, 84943, 84943, 84943, 84943, 84943, 84944, 84945, 84945, 84945, 84945, 84946, 84946, 84946, 84947, 84947, 84947; Priority Mail and USPS Ground Advantage Negotiated Service Agreement [14], 84941, 84942, 84942, 84944, 84944, 84944, 84944, 84944, 84945, 84946, 84946, 84947, 84947, 84947.

**October 31:** Product Change [55]: Priority Mail Express, Priority Mail, and USPS Ground Advantage Negotiated Service Agreement [47], 86846, 86846, 86846, 86847, 86847, 86847, 86847, 86848, 86848, 86848, 86848, 86849, 86849, 86849, 86849, 86850, 86850, 86850, 86850, 86851, 86851, 86851, 86851, 86852, 86852, 86852, 86852, 86853, 86853, 86853, 86854, 86854, 86854, 86855, 86855, 86855, 86855, 86855, 86856, 86856, 86856, 86856; Priority Mail and USPS Ground Advantage Negotiated Service Agreement [8], 86847, 86849, 86850, 86851, 86853, 86853, 86854, 86854.

**November 4:** Sunshine Act Meetings, 87653.

##### PROPOSED RULES

[None.]

##### FINAL RULES

[None.]

#### Postal Regulatory Commission

##### NOTICES

**October 22:** New Postal Products [2], 84403, 84404-84405.

**October 23:** New Postal Products, 84636-84637.

**October 24:** New Postal Products, 84939-84940.

**October 28:** New Postal Products [2], 85570-85571, 85572-85573.

**October 30:** Service Performance Measurement Systems for Market Dominant Products, 86380-86381; New Postal Products, 86381-86382; Complaint, 86382.

**October 31:** New Postal Products [2], 86843-86844, 86846; Service Performance Measurement Systems for Market Dominant Products, 86845.

**November 1:** New Postal Products, 87434-87435.

**November 4:** New Postal Products, 87651-87653.

##### PROPOSED RULES

**November 1:** Periodic Reporting, 87319-87320.

##### FINAL RULES

[None.]

#### DMM Advisory

**October 30:** International Service Suspension Notice – effective November 1, 2024. [Mongolia, Turkmenistan]

#### Postal Bulletin (PB 22662, October 31)

- Effective **October 31**, the IMM Individual Country Listing for Iran is revised to add an observation about including the addressee’s mobile phone number when mailing certain items to Iran.
- Effective **October 31**, IMM Exhibit 292.45a is revised to change the office of exchange code for Saint Kitts and Nevis from “SKB” to “BAS” for International Priority Airmail (IPA) items sent to Saint Kitts and Nevis. This revision is based on current international transportation routing. To provide mailers sufficient time to make necessary logistical and software changes, the Postal Service, through this *Postal Bulletin* article, is providing advance notice that mailers must begin using the code by January 19, 2025. Nonetheless, mailers are encouraged to immediately implement this change in order to expedite delivery.
- Effective **November 3**, IMM Exhibit 252.22 is revised to reflect that Electronic USPS Delivery Confirmation International service (E-USPS DELCON INTL) is available to the following countries as of November 3, 2024: Albania; Oman; Vietnam.

*Postal Bulletin* announcements of revisions to the DMM, IMM, or other publications often contain **two** dates: when a *revised document* is effective, and when a *revised standard* is effective. The effective date of a revised standard is typically *earlier* than when it will appear in a revised publication.

### USPS Industry Alerts

October 23, 2024, as UPDATED October 25, 2024

#### Automated Package Verification (APV) Dispute Process

On October 23, 2024, a new APV Dispute process will be available for customers to submit their APV disputes electronically instead of contacting the APV Helpdesk. Customers reaching out via email [verifypostagehelp@usps.gov](mailto:verifypostagehelp@usps.gov) will receive an automatic response with the link guiding them to the Dispute Webform Page <https://apvdisputes.usps.com/>. When the link is selected the APV dispute Webform will open. Customers will need the Revenue Assurance ID (RAID) and the last 4 digits of the Intelligent Mail Package Barcode (IMpb) to start the dispute process. Users will receive an error message if the incorrect Revenue Assurance ID and Intelligent Mail Package Barcode combination is entered, if there is already an existing Dispute matching the entered Revenue Assurance ID/Intelligent Mail Package Barcode, over 60 days, or trying to dispute an overpaid refund. Customer will enter their Contact Information, Dispute Information, and agree to the Terms and Conditions. All fields are required. Once the dispute has been submitted the customer is instructed to check with their PC Postage Entity for the status of their dispute after 15 days. They will also receive an email notification confirming the submission of their Dispute. For questions, please contact our support team at [apvsupport@usps.gov](mailto:apvsupport@usps.gov) or call 1-844-819-5187 for the APV Help Desk.

October 29, 2024

#### PostalOne System – Informed Delivery Promotion Discounts Not Being Applied to Some Finalized Statements

On October 29, 2024, the PostalOne System experienced an issue where the Informed Delivery promotion discounts are not being applied to some finalized statements. Mailers are requested to continue to submit the mailings with Informed Delivery promotion discounts as normal, and the US Postal Service will evaluate the statements that were eligible and did not receive the Informed Delivery promotion discounts. The IT teams are continuing to investigate the issue. We apologize for any inconvenience. All Business Service Administrators (BSAs) should alert their impacted stakeholders. During normal business hours M-F (7:00 AM CT – 7:00 PM CT), direct any inquiries or concerns to the Mailing and Shipping Solutions Center (MSSC) via eMail [[MSSC@usps.gov](mailto:MSSC@usps.gov)] or telephone [ (877) 672-0007 ].



October 30, 2024

#### **International Service Suspension Notice Effective November 1, 2024**

Effective November 1, 2024, the Postal Service will suspend international mail acceptance to **Mongolia and Turkmenistan** until further notice due to unavailable transportation. Customers are asked to refrain from mailing items addressed to the following countries, until further notice: Mongolia; Turkmenistan. 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, 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](https://about.usps.com/newsroom/service-alerts/international/?utm_source=residential&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=res_to_intl).

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October 30, 2024

#### **Promotions Reporting Unavailable**

Promotions Activity Reports accessed within the Business Customer Gateway are currently unavailable. We anticipate having the issue resolved by Sunday, November 2nd. For information regarding the 2024 and 2025 Promotions, please visit our site here to find out more about each Promotion: <https://postalpro.usps.com/promotions>. If you have any questions, please reach out to the team via the Mailing Promotions Portal on the Business Customer Gateway: <https://gateway.usps.com/eAdmin/view/signin>.

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October 30, 2024

#### **Upcoming 2025 Mailing Promotions Webinars**

Join our subject matter experts to learn about how you can get the most value from the 2025 Mailing Promotions in these upcoming webinars. To recap, in August 2024, we hosted Part 1 of a two-part webinar series introducing the 2025 Mailing Promotions and Add-Ons. Part 1 recording: <https://postalpro.usps.com/promotions/2025web1>. This November, we will host Part 2 of the series and provide an overview of the upcoming 2025 Integrated Technology Promotion. Part 2. Overview of 2025 Mailing Promotions; Learn about the essential details, including participation requirements and important updates. Date: November 14, 2024, Time: 2PM – 3PM EST, Webinar Details: Link to Join: <https://usps.zoomgov.com/j/1605697524?pwd=jDtFjdPEZfRDweExHlgsA61QOBsp36.1>. To join by audio: 1 503-336-1236 or 1 952-229-5070 or 1 650-581-7094 or 1 855-860-4313 or 1 678-317-3330 & follow prompts. Zoom Webinar ID: 160 569 7524; Zoom Passcode: 588736. 2025 Integrated Technology Promotion Webinar; Learn about the upcoming 2025 Integrated Technology Promotion, what's new, what qualifies and how to enroll. Date: November 15, 2024, Time: 1 – 2PM EST, Webinar Details: Link to join: <https://usps.zoomgov.com/j/1614514067?pwd=GhGPiASU8LTN3d28DrN6bqIKpYIBxa.1>. To join by audio: 1 503 336 1236 or 1 952-229-5070 or 1 650-581-7094 or 1 855-860-4313 or 1 678 317 3330 & follow prompts. Zoom Webinar ID: 161 451 4067; Zoom Passcode: 377477. Registration Begins: November 20th, 2024. Promotion Period: January 1 – December 31, 2025 (up to 6-consecutive months of your choice). Additional resources are available on PostalPro: 2025 Integrated Technology Guidebook: <https://postalpro.usps.com/promotions/25-it>; 2025 Promotions Calendar: <https://postalpro.usps.com/promotions>.

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November 1, 2024

#### **Business Customer Gateway eDoc Training Series – Business Customer Gateway (BCG) and Postal Wizard (PW)**

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: November 5: Business Customer Gateway (BCG)/ Postal Wizard (PW); November 19: Intelligent Mail for Small Business Tool (IMsb); December 3: Intelligent Mail for Small Business Tool (IMsb). Join us for the next session – Business Customer Gateway (BCG)/ Postal Wizard (PW) on Tuesday, November 5, 2024, at 1:00 PM EST. Meeting URL: <https://usps.zoomgov.com/j/1603767418?pwd=TTfONWNVMXQ2UW1wcUVCCeEt5WfILZz09>; 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).

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November 1, 2024

#### **2025 National Postal Forum – Deadline to Submit Your Workshop Proposal Has Been Extended**

The National Postal Forum has extended the deadline to submit your workshop proposal to November 8, 2024. Shipping, Mailing, and Supply Chain industry professionals are invited to submit a workshop proposal(s) for the 2025 National Postal Forum, being held in Nashville TN, April 27-30. Workshops are an integral part of the educational content brought to you at NPF, covering a variety of hot topics within the industry. Your submission should fit into one of the following workshop tracks: Driving Mail Growth with Cutting-edge Innovations; Shipping Solutions to Advantage; Data, Technology, and Visibility for Tomorrow's Competitive Advantage; Professional Growth through Strategic Leadership; Operational Excellence from Mail Setup to Delivery. Workshops will take place at NPF in the Gaylord Opryland Convention Center April 27-30, 2025. Select the link to submit your proposal – 2025 Call for Presentations (goeshow.com). You will be required to include a topic, brief description, and learning objectives. A limited number of workshops will be selected. If you have any comments regarding presentation submissions, please contact Laurie Woodhams at [lwoodhams@npf.org](mailto:lwoodhams@npf.org). We look forward to networking with you at the Forum.

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November 2, 2024

**PostalOne System – Informed Delivery Promotion Processing**

On Friday, November 1, 2024, the United States Postal Service identified an issue in the PostalOne system processing Informed Delivery Promotion. The issue has been resolved and the PostalOne application will process a refund to effected postage statements. Mailings that errored out and did not process can be resubmitted for processing.

## Calendar

*To register for any Mailers Hub webinar, go to [MailersHub.com/events](https://MailersHub.com/events)*

November 12 – *Mailers Hub Webinar*

December 3 – *Mailers Hub Webinar*

Starting January 9, 2025, Mailers Hub webinars will be at 1pm on **Thursdays**, rather than Tuesdays, to minimize conflicts with other events.

January 9 – *Mailers Hub Webinar*

January 14-15 – MTAC Meeting, USPS Headquarters

January 30 – *Mailers Hub Webinar*

February 20 – *Mailers Hub Webinar*

March 11-12 – MTAC Meeting, USPS Headquarters

March 13 – *Mailers Hub Webinar*

March 27-30 – MFSA Conference, Grapevine (TX)

April 3 – *Mailers Hub Webinar*

April 24 – *Mailers Hub Webinar*

April 27-30 – National Postal Forum, Nashville (TN)

May 15 – *Mailers Hub Webinar*

June 5 – *Mailers Hub Webinar*

June 8-12 – IPMA Conference, Spokane (WA)

June 26 – *Mailers Hub Webinar*

July 17 – *Mailers Hub Webinar*

July 22-23 – MTAC Meeting, USPS Headquarters

August 7 – *Mailers Hub Webinar*

August 28 – *Mailers Hub Webinar*

September 18 – *Mailers Hub Webinar*

October 7-8 – MTAC Meeting, USPS Headquarters

October 9 – *Mailers Hub Webinar*

October 22-24 – Printing United, Orlando (FL)

October 30 – *Mailers Hub Webinar*

November 20 – *Mailers Hub Webinar*

December 11 – *Mailers Hub Webinar*



*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.*

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