



Commuting to work

If you commute to work using mass transit, or pay for work-related parking on a regular basis, you should be using the commuter program. This program allows Postal Service career employees to pay commuting costs on a pre-tax basis, subject to Internal Revenue Service regulations. WageWorks, the company that provides the program services for USPS, has announced changes effective this summer.

Employees can use pre-tax dollars to pay for commuting expenses by enrolling in the WageWorks program. How much they save is based on their individual tax bracket and how much they pay each month for commuting expenses. Eligible transit expenses include buses, trains, subways, ferries and qualifying vanpools. Eligible qualified parking expenses include Park-N-Ride.

An online enrollment tool and savings calculator is provided at <http://commuterworks4me.com>. All career Postal Service employees are eligible to participate in the program. New employees need to allow 30 days for their information to be entered into the WageWorks system.

Using an example of a pre-tax election of \$120 per month, with an average personal tax rate of 30 percent, an employee would save \$432 annually, which otherwise would have been due as federal tax. The current IRS maximum mass transit limit is \$230 monthly.

In the past, the program required that election be made two months in advance. The enhanced program provides for elections to be made each month for the next month.

Customer Connect success stories

During Customer Connect/NALC teleconferences, national business agents have included presentations identifying success stories using one or more of the following criteria:

- Letter carrier submitting most leads consistently (great if sales are result of such leads)
- Letter carrier with most positive customer feedback (such carrier relationships are why the program works)
- Letter carrier submitting lead(s) with highest sale
- Letter carrier with the greatest “pro”-customer enthusiasm (explain reasoning)

This month, we'll share some of the successes from Regions 1 through 4:

Region 1—San Diego Branch 70 letter carrier Robert Buchanan sees his Customer Connect customer Kathy

receiving and sending out UPS boxes every day from her supply company of rabbit cages and supplies. Robert asked Kathy if she knew of our prices, that he came every day for free and could pick up. Thanks to Robert's Customer Connect lead, this customer uses USPS to the tune of \$19,000 annually.

Fellow Branch 70 carrier Laura Mullen saw her customer Yuriy receiving a lot of boxes from a UPS truck, and she asked him if he was starting a business and if the Postal Service could assist. Yuriy replied “yes” and said he would be more than open to hearing what USPS had to offer to assist his electronics business. A Customer Connect lead was submitted, and the customer's needs included Priority Mail flat rate shipping of 45 to 50 Priority packages per week. The estimated new annual revenue generated is \$42,000.

Region 2—Portland, OR Branch 82 member Michael Khamsot turned in a lead from Ellington Handbags, which resulted in \$274,560 worth of revenue for USPS.

Region 3—Naperville, IL Branch 1151 President Debbie Blake-Moench proudly reports that 113 leads have been submitted year-to-date, with eight sales totaling \$4,922,756 in total sales.

- Pensky Chen's lead generated \$4.5 million.
- Yung Hsiao had a lead result in a \$92,000 sale.
- Kwang Lee had a lead result in a \$118,140 sale.
- Sharon Brown had a lead result in a \$35,802 sale.

Naperville is one of four offices in the district that is testing a same-day pick-up program where mailers can call before noon and their parcels will be picked up the same day.

Region 4—Craig Hardy of Centennial CO Branch 5996 sold his customer, “Baxter Boo,” on using the USPS prior to the sales representative even contacting them. Baxter Boo is an online pet supply store specializing in pet supplies. After the sale, Baxter Boo was having problems getting its outgoing packages picked up, so Craig would make a trip to fill up his LLV with outgoing parcels. Craig would sometimes make two trips to get all the outgoing parcels. The district Customer Connect coordinator assisted and a permanent collection was established. The original sale was \$137,000 in 2010 and expectations are that the revenue will double this year. ☒