



USPS plan to profitability

Have you heard about or seen the USPS plan to profitability in five years? Well, it's pretty much the same stuff: cut, slash and reduce services. The report indicates that the USPS is ranked as the best postal service within the world's top 20 largest economies. In addition, the cost of a first-class stamp is the lowest of all these countries. The closest is Canada, with \$.61 for first-class mail, a difference of some \$.16. Just think if the USPS had the freedom to raise the rates. It definitely would help with the overall financial picture, that is for sure. It would not be the sole solution, but it would help.

Much of the report dealt with the changes caused by the electronic transmission of e-mail, bill paying, and Social Security checks and tax filings no longer being mailed as being part of the cause for the erosion of first-

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class mail. It certainly doesn't help when the USPS is telling our customers that it wants to eliminate a day of service, change the delivery standards, etc. This will only lead to further erosion, as our customers will look to other means to advertise.

Do you remember when USPS representatives went to Congress to get authorization to automate and speed up the mail process? Millions of dollars were spent on delivery barcode sorters. Now they want to go back to Congress to slow down the processing of mail. Hopefully, someone in Congress will remember that and say, "Wait a minute." That kind of logic just doesn't pass the street corner test. Congress should immediately send them back to L'Enfant Plaza for a new plan.

What might the new plan look like? To start off, let's eliminate the USPS obligation for the pre-funding payments to the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefit Fund

(PSRHBF). The requirements in this law are just not realistic. Requiring the USPS to pre-fund for retiree health benefits over the next 75 years in just 10 years would bankrupt any company or agency. The intentions of Congress were noble, but the results of what has happened have been devastating. Based on this, Congress should correct the problem—immediately.

Next, there is no question that there is an overpayment to the Federal Employees Retirement System. This overpayment also should be given back to the USPS immediately. Then the USPS should be given the latitude to establish itself in the marketplace electronically with delivery by hard copy.

In addition, we should be looking to develop what is needed in the business world for handling and processing requests from customers to the actual delivery of products

to the home. Fuel prices will still be an issue in the years to come. Letter carriers are delivering every day across the country and can reduce the number of vehicles on the road by being the source for the American public to receive their products and services.

Let's think a little bit more about delivery. Why not delivery on Sunday? Oops, that would be seven days a week. The USPS wants five, so why I am suggesting seven days? Well, in reality, it is the most logical move to increase business and the amount of mail in the mailstream. Businesses and the public would look more favorably to the USPS if they had the ability to mail or receive a product seven days a week. Going to five-day delivery right away makes everyone look to or consider other sources as a means to achieve this. Five-day service is a bad decision and would lead to other, more complicated financial problems as people who gravitate to other sources to achieve delivery.

This should be our time to grow in the electronic world. The Internet will only grow in the future, and we need to be there to serve America. Write to your representatives and senators today to save and protect the USPS. ☒