

Customer Connect winners



Timothy C. O'Malley

Sandusky, OH, was selected as a Customer Connect award-winner for the second year in a row. Congratulations and well done! I asked Region 11 National Business Agent (NBA) Dan Toth, "What is it that makes Sandusky so successful?" He advised that there are several reasons, including a "team atmosphere." This seems to be a major factor there. The employees are treated with respect and they respond. Also, they have an "engaged coordinator," who is both respected and determined to make the program work. I recently visited this team and found that it is a perfect example of what we hope an office can be. Thanks for your hard work, and congratulations.

Other offices that have been recognized as employee engagement breakfast winners are Monterey Park, CA; Ranchland, TX; Bluffton, IN; Burnsville, MN; Frederick, MD; and Woonsocket, RI. Congratulations go out to everyone. The NALC appreciates every office and member participating in the Customer Connect program.

I also attended a Customer Connect celebration at the Frederick, MD, main post office. Region 13 NBA Tim Dowdy advised that the carrier Customer Connect coordinator said that having the district field sales representative located in this office is an aid to the program. The field sales representative is both visible and active with the carriers. When the carriers provide leads, those leads are then followed up aggressively. Being able to go to someone local to discuss a lead provides the response and feedback needed for the carriers to succeed.

Proposed postal rates being considered

The U.S. Postal Service has proposed raising postage rates this spring to adjust for inflation. The plan submitted to the Postal Regulatory Commission provides for price increases across all classes of mail of an average of 1.97 percent on April 26. The cost of a single-piece stamp would remain at 49 cents, but the rate for letters weighing more than 1 ounce would increase from 21 cents to 22 cents per additional ounce.

Additionally, it would raise the price of sending letters internationally from \$1.15 to \$1.20 and bump the rate for postcards from 34 cents to 35 cents. None of the increases would affect shipping products or single-piece stamps.

The Postal Service has estimated that its plan would bring in about \$900 million per year. Since the plan would not take effect until April, it would increase revenue by only \$400 million for 2015.

The USPS lost \$5.5 billion in 2014, mainly due to the congressional mandate to prepay \$5.6 billion annually toward retiree

health benefits. The overall annual revenue increased from \$67.3 billion in 2013 to \$67.8 billion 2014. This marked the second consecutive year revenue has increased. Prior to this, the last time revenue increased over the previous year was 2008.

The chart below shows the total mail volume in billions. As you can see, the volume went down from 158.4 billion to 155.4 billion in 2014 while revenue increased. Signs indicate that the reduction in mail volume seem to be slowing and may stabilize as the economy continues to grow. The rate increase, along with stable mail volume, would aid in our recovery.

Consumer Reports: FedEx vs. UPS vs. USPS

Consumer Reports recently compared FedEx, UPS and the Postal Service in the following categories: Number of deliveries, convenience, reliability and cost. The scale was 5 as the highest and 1 as the lowest. The magazine considered the number of deliveries to be a tie at 5 for all three companies. For convenience, USPS was No. 1 at 4.3. Both FedEx and UPS were at 3.5. For reliability, USPS was a 3. Both of the others received a 1. For cost, FedEx and USPS received a 3 and UPS received a 1. The overall score was USPS at 3.8, followed by FedEx at 3.1 and UPS at 2.6.

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