

Customer Connect adds up for USPS

By touching every address in the United States at least six days a week, letter carriers naturally develop special relationships with their customers. Since USPS's Customer Connect program began in 2003, thousands of carriers have successfully leveraged their interactions with business customers to encourage them to use the Postal Service instead of relying on private delivery and mailing services. Below are some recent stories about Customer Connect leads submitted by letter carriers that have helped USPS earn new revenue.

Region 5

Charles Sexton, regional administrative assistant for Region 5, passed along several success stories that have boosted the bottom line for USPS. He began with high praise for Des Moines, IA Branch 352 trustee **Michele Donnelly**, the Customer Connect coordinator for the Hawkeye District. Sexton notes that not only does Donnelly regularly assist carriers with leads (eagle-eyed



Donnelly

readers will remember her name from an assist in June's Customer Connect), she has come up with several of her own, including one from watching local TV news—Fusion Boutique, a new women's clothing store in West Des Moines, sealed a deal with USPS worth \$171,000 thanks to Donnelly.



McKinney

A banner deal: Another Branch 352 standout is **Mike McKinney**, who noticed

that Martin's Flag Co., also in West Des Moines, was using the USPS for stamps but a competitor for packages. McKinney suggested that Martin's consider USPS for packages, too. Now Martin's is saving money and the Postal Service is earning an extra \$74,250 annually.

Goal!: Branch 352 was not done covering itself with glory. **Ken Parry** also submitted a lead for a business in West Des Moines, Pro Image Sports, scoring \$173,250 of annual revenue.



Parry

Prodigal customer: Meanwhile, over in the eastern part of the state, Maquoketa, IA Branch 257 member **Gregory Marburger**'s lead resulted in Heartland Signs returning to the USPS fold after having strayed to a competitor, bringing \$193,331 in annualized revenue back into Postal Service coffers.



Marburger

Heaven sent: Davenport, IA Branch 506's **Daniel Boone** said it took "two minutes" to turn in a lead for Davenport's Religious Supply



Boone



Nashua, NH Branch 230 member **Tara Nollet** (l), approached a new business on her route, Nashua Nutrition, a vitamin and supplement company, about using USPS for its shipping. She's shown here with the shipping manager. Her initiative netted \$682,000 for the Postal Service.

Center. That two minutes turned into an estimated \$95,000 as the store opted to use the Postal Service for order fulfillment.

Tiger's roar: Kelly Teegarden, Customer Connect coordinator for the Gateway District, had high praise for Columbia, MO's Tiger Station. "Tiger has weathered some recent changes that could have deterred participation in programs such as Customer Connect," she said, "but the carriers are committed to their customers ... Tiger Station continues to knock it out of the park." The station has submitted leads that have resulted in \$253,000 in new revenue.



Tiger Station is recognized for its Customer Connect efforts. Pictured (from l) are Glendia Ayers, BDS for the Gateway District; Region 5 RAA Charles Sexton; Jeremy Robinson; Megan Hane; Jean Viox; Drew Maddox, Customer Connect coordinator for the Tiger Station; Peggy Zandvliet; and Kelly Teegarden, Customer Connect coordinator for the Gateway District.

Graber Olive House

While out holiday shopping, **Paula Miller** stumbled upon a gift that keeps on giving for the USPS.

Miller, a retiree who serves as both vice president and Customer Connect coordinator for Upland, CA Branch 2168, was browsing the aisles at Gruber Olive House when she noticed that the shipping costs were awfully high. "I always keep an eye out to see if there is some business

Miller we can capture; I thought, 'maybe I'll just inquire.'"

The food emporium, founded in 1894, is an institution in Ontario, CA; Miller describes it as "one of those sweet little shops you hope never goes out of business." She passed the lead to **Dennis Binder**, president of the branch (a Gruber employee in his teen years), who passed it along to the business development



Binder

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Members receive a pin as a symbol of gratitude for your military service and membership in NALC.

If you are interested in joining the group, complete the sign-up card at right and mail it to the address included. A fillable version is also available at nalc.org/veterans.



Rhonda Graziano (second from r) was recognized for a Customer Connect lead at her office in Oakhurst, NJ. Along with her are, from l, Post Office Operations Manager Jeff West, NALC Area Rep. Christine Strasser, District Manager James Drummer and New Jersey Merged Branch 38 President Mike O'Neill.

specialist.

Gruber was mid-contract with a competitor, but they agreed to use USPS for some Priority Mail envelope shipping, a net gain of \$33,696 for USPS.

"In our stand-ups, we always say, [bringing in new leads] is securing

everyone's retirement by keeping the Postal Service in business," Miller said. "If we retain our good quality customer service, it will help all of us, even the newest carriers for their future retirement. We're all working toward one goal: keeping the Postal Service alive and thriving." **PR**



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