



Association for Postal Commerce


"Representing those who use or support the use of mail for Business Communication and Commerce"


"You will be able to enjoy only those postal rights you believe are worth defending."


1800 Diagonal Rd., Ste 320 * Alexandria, VA 22314-2862 * Ph.: +1 703 524 0096 * Fax: +1 703 997 2414

Postal News for December 2014


December 31, 2014


 [Yahoo! News](#): Kenya's technology rush gave hope that new ideas would help millions of Africans use their mobile phones to circumvent poor infrastructure but local start-ups are failing to draw major investors or create profits. Lack of talent, problems in attaining seed capital and ideas that cannot be sold to a mass market or easily monetized have so far held back hundreds of Kenyan start ups. With mobile phone use nearing 80 percent, cheap data and soaring smartphone uptake, Kenya provides one of sub-Saharan Africa's most appealing environments for tech entrepreneurs. Forced to play catch up on development issues, engineers hope Africa can jump to the front of the technology revolution. African economies continue to expand rapidly, Safaricom has launched super-fast 4G internet and 19 million Kenyans are expected to own smartphones by end of 2017.


 [Times Leader](#): The National Newspaper Association, a leading advocate for rural people affected by ongoing post office closures in small towns and the consolidation of mail processing centers nationwide, wants Congress to pass a reform bill that would protect Saturday home delivery and improve service overall to customers in the country's most remote areas. The funding resolution that Congress passed earlier this month does ensure Saturday deliveries until Sept. 30, but the broader reform bill still lacks approval.

 [Washington Examiner](#): Acting Postal Regulatory Commission Chairman Robert Taub banned all official travel until further notice just days after President Obama nominated him as the interim successor to the former PRC chief, who had come under fire for taking too many overseas trips. Taub announced the new policy in response to concerns raised by the agency's watchdog, according to an internal memo obtained by the Washington Examiner. "Effective immediately, all international and domestic travel by Commissioners and staff, except for those that were approved before Dec. 3, 2014, is frozen until further notice," the Dec. 8 memo said.



 [Fedscoop](#): The United States Postal Service is still recovering after a cyber intrusion compromised the data of 800,000 of its current and former employees earlier this year, but that doesn't mean that the agency's information technology agenda for 2015 stops at cybersecurity. Since the breach, USPS has made a number of relatively major infrastructure and account management changes, according to John Edgar, USPS' vice president of information technology. Now the agency is positioning itself toward the next phase of response to the breach: recovery. "We're doing OK," Edgar told FedScoop. "We are now in the middle of planning the next phase of [response], which we'll be implementing at a future date. We'll be continuing to incrementally improve the security posture of the organization and deal with the infrastructure, the operational and the end user behavioral changes necessary to raise the overall security level."

 **Internet Retailer:** As of Jan. 5, both UPS and FedEx will be imposing dimensional weight pricing on all ground shipments. Experts say approximately 75% to 90% of all online retail orders ship by ground services, so e-retailers must be ready for higher bills. The New Year is bringing with it higher shipping costs for many online retailers. The new costs started ringing up Dec. 29 when UPS Inc. began imposing dimensional weight pricing on all ground shipments. FedEx Corp. plans to do the same starting Monday, Jan. 5.

 **Washington Post:** The U.S. Postal Service next week plans to begin a new round of plant closings and consolidations that will affect dozens of mail-processing centers, despite calls from more than half the members of the outgoing Senate to postpone the changes. All told, the Postal Service plans to close 82 mail processing centers nationwide next year, starting on Jan. 10. USPS officials have said the consolidation plan will help the financially struggling agency save money and adjust to dwindling demand for first-class mail, one of its core services. USPS said in its annual report to Congress this month that the past three years of changes “resulted in negligible service impact, required no employee layoffs and generated annual cost savings of approximately \$865 million.”


 **From the Federal Register:**


Postal Regulatory Commission	
RULES	
Update to Product Lists , 78714–78716 [2014–30565]	[TEXT] [PDF]
NOTICES	
New Postal Products , 78919–78920 [2014–30577]	[TEXT] [PDF]


December 30, 2014



Global Address Data Association: The latest Global Address Data Association December 2014 Newsletter can be downloaded from www.globaladdress.org.

 **Roll Call:** House Republicans are moving to increase the use of dynamic scoring through a rules change that would require long-term estimates of the economic effects of major legislation. The rule defines major legislation as any proposal that would have a budgetary effect equal to or greater than .25 of projected gross domestic product in any fiscal year covered by the budget resolution. Based on current GDP, .25 percent is about \$45 billion. The rule would also allow the House Budget chairman, or in the case of revenue legislation the chair of vice chair of the JCT, to designate other mandatory spending or tax proposals as major legislation requiring a dynamic score. The estimate would include a "qualitative assessment" of the budgetary effects of legislation in the 20-year period following the customary 10-year window covered by the budget resolution.

 **Politico:** Democrats are still dancing in the end zone after running up the score on dozens of President Barack Obama’s nominees during the lame duck. They should enjoy the moment, because Republicans are about to step up their goal-line defense. Now with GOP Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky) set to take over the Senate, the GOP’s leverage is back and Obama will never again experience the heady level of nominee productivity of the past two years.

 **Independent:** More than 270 managers at An Post got bonuses of €3,000 each to reward their performance last year despite a hike in the price of stamps to cover major losses.



Dead Tree Edition: The U.S. Postal Service presented a long wish list to Congress today, along with a subliminal message. “Despite challenging marketplace conditions, an inflexible business model imposed by federal law and financial issues caused by legislative constraints, the Postal Service is moving forward with a lot of momentum,” Mickey D. Barnett and Postmaster General Pat Donahoe wrote in a joint letter appearing in the agency’s annual report to Congress. Translation: “Hey, Congress, the Postal Service is scrambling to keep its head above water because you’ve created a helluva mess. Now could you get off your butts and do something more useful than naming post offices?”



FedEx Reuters: United Parcel Service Inc and FedEx Corp are rolling out new pricing systems to curb online retailers' large package sizes, but industry experts warn many small firms are unprepared and could pay up to 50 percent more for shipping. Starting Monday, UPS will no longer charge for U.S. ground packages under 3 cubic feet by weight but by their "dimensional weight." Instead of simply weighing a box, retailers must multiply its length by its height and width, and then divide that by 166 to reach its dimensional weight. UPS and FedEx announced the change in May and have worked to help customers adjust. But some small firms lack the resources to change packaging and may switch to the U.S. Postal Service (USPS). The USPS still charges by weight. In July, it announced some price cuts to target e-commerce.



FedEx Wall Street Journal: After winter storms and a surge of last-minute packages snarled shipping last year, United Parcel Service Inc. and FedEx Corp. turned things around and delivered an estimated 98% of express packages on time on Dec. 24, according to data from tracking-software developer Shipmatrix Inc. That compares to a year ago, when FedEx’s on-time rate was closer to 90% and UPS’s was just 83%.



From the Federal Register:

Postal Regulatory Commission	
NOTICES	
New Postal Products ,	
78503 [2014-30228]	[TEXT]
78503-78504 [2014-30233]	[TEXT]
78504 [2014-30360]	[TEXT]
Postal Service	
NOTICES	
Product Changes:	
Priority Mail Express Negotiated Service Agreement ,	
78505 [2014-30425]	[TEXT]




Business Standard: The postal department will use new technology to provide quick service to customers and introduce new products to generate revenue, Chief Post Master General of Andhra Pradesh Circle B V Sudhakar said here today. Launching a smart phone-based Andriod solution to monitor letter box clearance at the Lawson's Bay Colony post office here today, he said that the facility is now functioning at Hyderabad and Vijayawada. The facility will enable people and the postal department to know the status of letter box clearance and its dispatch to customers through a a smartphone which would be given to postal clearance personnel who clear post boxes.




Office of the Inspector General: [How often did you use your smartphone to pay for things this holiday season?](#) With 1 billion smartphones shipped in 2013, it’s safe to say mobile devices are the future of shopping, banking, and transactions – if not everything. Retailers and technology companies certainly agree, as they race to provide consumers with the ideal mobile payment system. Security of data and access to consumer data remain key elements. Do mobile payment solutions protect a consumer’s bank account and credit data? And who has access to the valuable consumer data? What do you think? Is there a role for the Postal Service in mobile payment apps? Or is this an area best served by the private sector?

December 29, 2014


 ***At the Postal Regulatory Commission: [Docket No. ACR2014, United States Postal Service FY 2014 Annual Compliance Report](#)***

 ***Attention Postal One! Users:*** PostalOne! ® Is currently experiencing problems and the application is currently unavailable. There is an open CI, CI # 280766 that we are working with all of the USPS technical support teams to resolve the issue. We will provide an update on the status of the issue on an hourly basis until the problem is resolved. . . . It is now resolved.


 ***Lexology:*** "Please don't, mister postman: how to respond when the Postal Service claims that you underpaid postage " by David Levy, Venable LLP.


 ***NewsTalk 106-108FM:*** A retired school teacher from east Galway has gone on hunger strike in an attempt to save his local post office. Michael J Kilgannon (74) has formed the Post Office Users Association, to campaign for retention of postal services in rural Ireland.

 ***FTSE Global Markets:*** According to the Nikkei Business Daily, Japan Post Holdings Co Ltd and its banking and insurance units plan to debut on the Tokyo Stock Exchange in September next year, in what promises to be one of the nation's biggest initial public offerings. The Japan Post Group, which is fully state controlled, is expected to detail its IPO plans by the end of the first quarter next year. The group, which owns Japan Post Bank, Japan Post Insurance and postal service unit Japan Post, will submit a preliminary application to the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE) next March, the newspaper said. No firm details have been announced as yet, however it is widely anticipated that around 10% of each unit will be floated on the exchange.


 ***eCommerceBytes:*** Ruth Goldway bristles at the suggestion that she was pushed out as the nation's top mailing regulator due to the travel expenses she racked up during her tenure at the agency that oversees the U.S. Postal Service. Since at least 2012, Goldway has been dogged by allegations of excessive travel on the government dime, but she maintains that her ouster was a purely political maneuver. "I don't think there was anything sensational there," she said in an interview. Goldway acknowledges that she had become a magnet for criticism by some lawmakers on Capitol Hill, including some who have been pushing to marginalize the PRC through postal reform legislation. Goldway was already on borrowed time at the PRC, having completed her third term in November. Several months earlier, she had notified the White House that she was not interested in serving another term. But Goldway believes that her chairmanship was used as a political bargaining chip, arguing that the White House offered her demotion as a concession to Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) to clear the way for the Senate to confirm two nominees to serve on the commission. "It's my understanding that the White House, after I completed my term, decided to remove me in order that the deadlock would be broken," Goldway said. "I don't think there's any question that the White House position was directly related to moving the nominations forward," she added. "That's the big picture politics."

December 28, 2014

 ***The Fiscal Times:*** When the Board of Governors' chair, Mickey Barnett, had to leave his post on December 8 that left a whopping six vacant slots. With no incoming nominees confirmed before the Senate left town, the board is now operating without a quorum. Rather than lose the ability to function, the board created a temporary emergency committee allowing the remaining members to provide "continuity of operations." This is the first time the USPS board has ever resorted to such a contingency, and the legal rationale could easily be challenged. The Postal Service is in crisis. Its rules are onerous and impossible to manage, and it faces severe threats from within. Ultimately the agency needs Congressional action to relieve it of its funding burdens and grant more authority to innovate. But the Board of Governors could start by using existing authority to turn around the entire direction of the Postal Service.


 ***BBC:*** More than 1,000 staff in Plymouth have been working to decipher addresses that cannot be read by computers during the Christmas holidays. Photographs of "awful writing" on some letters and parcels are sent to the

manual data entry centre. The centre employs about 500 people, with 880 additional agency staff taken on over the Christmas period to help get post to its intended recipients. Plymouth has the largest of three specialist centres in the UK. On busy days leading up to Christmas, photographs of up to 20m addresses were sent to Plymouth.


 [Daily Mail](#): Delivery companies Royal Mail and DX Group were approached before Christmas in a bid to rescue parcel delivery firm City Link, after it went into administration this week. Preliminary talks were reportedly held in recent weeks between the firms and KPMG, which was helping the company's owner attempt to find a potential buyer. It comes as it was revealed last night that 3,700 jobs are at risk - 1,000 more than originally thought, after workers found out the firm had gone into administration via news reports on Christmas Day. It is understood that Royal Mail is interested in taking on some of the company's large customer contracts, including deliveries for high street retailers, according to Sky News. The broadcaster also reports that DX held talks about a more comprehensive deal involving City Link's assets and could now acquire parts of the company out of administration.


December 27, 2014

 [Baltimore Sun](#): "Postal worker health fraud rises as mail volume falls"

 [MS News Now](#): The U.S. Postal Service is warning customers to keep an eye out for a bogus email claiming to be from USPS that installs a malicious virus on your computer. The email claims a package delivery has been intercepted or that the recipient has online postage charges. To check on the issues, the reader must then click on a link, open the attachment, or print the label. When they do so, a virus is activated that can steal information--such as usernames, passwords, and financial account information. The U.S. Postal Inspection Service advises recipients to delete the message before opening any links or attachments.

December 26, 2014


 [Air Cargo World](#): 'Tis the season of many happy returns – specifically, the gift-return frenzy following the Christmas holiday. FedEx, which supplied many of the millions of gifts that were unwrapped yesterday, now may be seeking a piece of the lucrative returns market with the recent acquisitions of reverse logistics firm Genco and the cross-border e-commerce IT service provider Bongo International. Pittsburgh-based Genco, through its Genco Marketplace, sells returned and surplus inventory to discount retailers, who purchase the goods in bulk at wholesale prices for resale at deep discount, often to overseas customers. Meanwhile, Bongo International, based in St. Petersburg, Fla., helps make duty and tax calculations, currency conversions and other export compliance management services for international e-commerce retailers. Bongo currently has a client network of about 2,000 retailers in the U.S. and Europe. FedEx said in a statement that Genco had annual sales of US\$1.6 billion and more than 11,000 employees, handling more than 600 million returned items a year. Satish Jindel, president of SJ Consulting Group Inc., told Bloomberg that he estimated GENCO's total market value at about US\$2 billion. The Genco acquisition, still subject to approval by federal regulators, is expected to close early next year.


 [Kirriemuir Herald](#): Local MP Mike Weir has challenged ministers over their "refusal to engage" on the Post Office modernisation programme, which is seeing major changes to the network throughout Angus. Mr Weir raised the issue during a ministerial statement on the renewal of the contract for the Post Office Card Account. While he welcomed the contract's renewal, Mr Weir challenged the minister's assertion that the modernisation programme was going well and that the POCA would be a stepping stone to mainstream banking. He pointed out that in Angus many post offices are being moved or changed from stand-alone to local models with concerns about the loss of privacy in banking transactions. Mr Weir also expressed frustration that ministers had simply "washed their hands" of the continuing difficulties with the Post Office network. He said: "Ever since the passing of the Postal Services Act which privatised the Royal Mail and created a separate Post Office Limited UK government ministers have simply washed their hands of the continuing problems of the network, despite the fact it is taxpayers money that is financing the programme.



[Global Newswire](#): With a record number of consumers shopping online for the holidays, post-holiday returns and exchanges will keep UPS® (NYSE: UPS) busy right through the new year. UPS National Returns Day is


Jan. 6, 2015, when the company expects consumers will ship more than 800,000 packages back to retailers and merchants. By the end of the first full week in January, UPS anticipates transporting 4 million return packages in the United States. "We have successfully completed two of three phases of the Peak holiday delivery season. Our Cyber Weekend and pre-Christmas performance helped retailers take advantage of holiday demand. We are now preparing for a surge in volume driven by Returns Week beginning next Monday," said Alan Gershenhorn, UPS executive vice president and chief commercial officer. "As e-commerce continues to grow, simple returns services have become an essential part of the overall consumer shopping experience. Our research shows online shoppers care about returns convenience with 66% reviewing a retailer's return policy before making a purchase, and 68% said they would complete an online purchase if the retailer simply offered a free return shipping label," he said. According to the 2014 UPS Pulse of the Online Shopper Study™, returns are on the rise with 62% of consumers stating they returned an item bought online in 2014, compared to 51% in 2012.


 [The Korea Times](#): Korea Post said Friday that it will start buying secondhand cell phones at 220 post offices across the country next month. The telecom industry showed a mixed reaction to the state-run public company's plan, as they feel it could trigger unfair competition between private companies and the state entity. "Korea Post is a state-run public organization, having a nationwide network. Customers will naturally think the national agency is more reliable than private companies," said Kim Byung-yul, president of TH Global, a company purchasing used cell phones. Kim said the used phone market has been dominated by small and mid-sized private companies so far, so Korea Post's plan could mess up this ecosystem. Korea Post said it will offer a trial service first, similar to its budget phone sale business in response to the decline of its traditional mailing business.


 [Financial Times](#): City Link, the postal delivery company, has gone into administration, threatening 2,727 jobs and underscoring cut-throat competition in the parcels delivery market. The Coventry-based company, which is owned by private equity firm Better Capital, appointed Ernst & Young as administrators on Christmas Eve. It said it was unable to continue accepting new parcels due to the "continued substantial losses it would incur". Redundancy notices are due within days.

 [Financial Times](#): Japan's state-owned postal group has said its mammoth initial public offering that could raise more than \$30bn in the second half of next year will include the unusual step of floating the shares of its two main subsidiaries at the same time. Taizo Nishimuro, chief executive of Japan Post Holdings, said on Friday that listing the insurance and bank units at the same time as the holding company "was the best way to ensure fair valuation". The subsidiaries are the biggest players in their respective sectors.


December 25, 2014


 [AllGov](#): "Chairman of the Postal Regulatory Commission: Who Is Robert Taub?"


 [The Telegraph](#): La Poste, France's national postal service, is developing a six-rotor drone able to deliver parcels – notably medical supplies – as far as 12 miles away to isolated parts of the country. The tests, conducted in collaboration with the company Atechsys at La Poste's special test site in the Var, southern France, used a six-propeller drone able to carry loads of up to 16 inches by 12 inches by eight inches in size and weighing up to nine pounds in all weathers and terrains within a 12-mile radius. The idea is to be able to fly the drones in remote areas or places difficult to reach by car – up very steep roads, down hillsides and areas with few roads and over water. "We now know that we can reach isolated zones very rapidly," said GeoPost. "It's very interesting, notably for urgent medical needs or blood deliveries," it said.


 [The Denver Post](#): The U.S. Postal Service, it seems, has always been there, braving the weather and neighborhood dogs to ensure that mail is delivered. And that almost certainly includes many of the Christmas gifts under trees throughout Colorado. Lately, of course, the Postal Service has also had to endure the onslaught of the Internet, which has whittled away at hand-delivered mail. Indeed, the combination of changing technology, an outmoded business plan and the political interference of Congress threatens the very existence of the USPS and could someday inspire calls for a taxpayer bailout. Congress must give this quasi-public agency, which receives no taxpayer support, the freedom and incentives to restructure its operations so it can survive and thrive.

December 24, 2014

 **Reuters:** Facing a slump in the mail it had been delivering since the days of America's Revolutionary War, in 2012 the U.S. Postal Service began aggressively targeting e-commerce and lapsed customers as the way to salvage its declining business. "Really it started almost at the level of cold-calling, talking to people who really hadn't spoken to us in a long time," said Nagisa Manabe, who joined the USPS in May 2012 as chief marketing and sales officer from Coca-Cola Co after a career in the private sector. "And really trying to persuade them to consider us as a very viable alternative in the shipping market." With further drops in its traditional bread-and-butter products ahead, the USPS wants to capitalize on e-commerce, which consulting firm Detroit LLP has predicted should grow 14 percent this holiday season alone. But industry experts question whether the USPS has enough space in its delivery vans and whether its unionized work force can handle a greater proportion of the e-commerce market.


 **Wall Street Journal:** Sorry, last-minute holiday shoppers. United Parcel Service Inc. and FedEx Corp. started capping air express deliveries in recent days after an 11th-hour increase in packages caused some retailers to exceed agreed-upon limits, according to people briefed on the situation.

 **Mumbrella:** Postal service Australia Post appears to have been caught out over its use of social media influencers, after it emerged it was paying people without disclosing that their endorsements were being paid for.


 **ACT Media:** The courier service division of the Posta Romana recorded revenues higher by 13.4 percent over Jan.-Nov. 2014, with the estimates for the year end amounting to 14 percent, show official data the postal operator. The positive result recorded by the branch Express Services (SSE), the courier service division of Posta Romana (the Romanian Post National Company (CNPR)) was due in particular to the Prioripost service. According to this source, during the same period, the SSE expenses went down 11 percent. The total traffic recorded over Jan.-Nov 2014 exceeded 2.5 million courier operations, generating an income of about 19 million lei (4.2 million euros).

 ***At the Postal Regulatory Commission:***


Postal Regulatory Commission	
PROPOSED RULES	
Periodic Reporting , 77424-77425 [2014-30111]	[TEXT] [PDF]
Postal Service	
NOTICES	
Meetings; Sunshine Act , 77538 [2014-30140]	[TEXT] [PDF]
Product Changes:	
Priority Mail Express Negotiated Service Agreement , 77538 [2014-30143]	[TEXT] [PDF]
Priority Mail Negotiated Service Agreement , 77538 [2014-30139]	[TEXT] [PDF]


 **USNews:** The North Korea cyberattack that exposed Sony's private communications – and the response that messed with the rogue state's Internet – is what modern warfare looks like. But it brings to mind a less-modern – and much maligned – form of communication: the U.S. Postal Service. If we get rid of the Postal Service – or even drastically pare it back – we lose a critical communications tool in a national security crisis. One cyberattack could wipe out electronic data and communications. What happens if there's no way to back it up on paper?

December 23, 2014

 **DMM Advisory:** Published Federal Register Notices The following two Federal Register notices have been posted on the Federal Register website on December 17 and December 23, respectively, and will be posted on the [Postal Explorer](#)® website under [Federal Register Notices](#) on December 31.


- **New Standards to Enhance Business Reply Mail Visibility** — This final rule adopts revised standards to require the use of an Intelligent Mail® package barcode (IMpb) on Business Reply Mail® (BRM) labels intended for use on cartons, parcel-shaped items, or Priority Mail® items of any shape. The effective date is April 30, 2015. See the entire notice at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-17/html/2014-29479.htm>.
- **Address Quality Management Alternative** — This proposed rule adds a new Address Quality Measurement process for participating mailers who enter eligible full-service mailings. Customers are encouraged to comment on or before January 22, 2015. See the entire notice at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-23/html/2014-29943.htm>.

 **Gloucestershire Echo:** For many people it was a lifeline that kept them in touch with the news and a reminder of a more community-spirited time. But the unofficial delivery of newspapers to people in rural villages around Winchcombe by postal workers has come to an end. The Royal Mail has said it will no longer take newspapers along with the mail to properties in village such as Toddington and Alderton. It has come to a blow to an elderly woman who lives in a out-of-the-way home near Winchcombe.

 **The Nation:** Postal workers, mail handlers, letter carriers and rural carriers will process and deliver more than 15.5 billion packages, letters, and parcels this holiday season. It's intense, demanding, long-hours, late-night and weekend work that keeps the promise of a robust national Postal Service outlined in Article 1 of the United States Constitution. There is something profoundly wrong -- not to mention profoundly absurd -- about the notion that any federal official would abandon that promise and the workers who keep it. Yet, that is precisely what is happening. Even as United States Postal Service employees get the job done, with a better track record of care and efficiency than private competitors, the postal service itself is under attack. Pressured by extreme demands from Congress and hamstrung by outdated restrictions on how it can operate, the USPS faces financial challenges that are real – but those challenges can be addressed with relative ease. Unfortunately, instead of taking steps to ease the burden it created (with a 2006 requirement that the service prefund retiree benefits for the next 75 years), Congress ignored the issue. The House and Senate passed a "CROmnibus" spending bill packed with giveaways to Wall Street, big banks and big corporations and then quit town. Congress failed to take what the unions representing postal workers identify as the most necessary immediate step to aid the postal service: initiation of "a one-year moratorium on a reduction in service standards and plant closings." Congress also failed to reach an agreement on a stand-alone postal bill.

 **At the Postal Regulatory Commission:**

- [Docket No. RM2015-1](#) Order No. 2303 Concerning Semi-Permanent Exception from Periodic Reporting of Service Performance Measurement -- The Postal Regulatory Commission has granted the Postal Service's Request for a semi-permanent exception from periodic reporting of service performance for Alaska Bypass Service.

 **Wall Street Journal:** The U.S. economy posted its strongest growth in more than a decade during the third quarter, supported by robust consumer spending and business investment. Gross domestic product, the broadest measure of goods and services produced across the economy, grew at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 5.0% in the third quarter, the Commerce Department said Tuesday. That was up from the second quarter's growth rate of 4.6% and the strongest pace since the third quarter of 2003.

 **From the Federal Register:**

Postal Regulatory Commission

NOTICES	
Postal Rate Changes ,	
77054 [2014–29932]	[TEXT] [PDF]
Postal Service	
PROPOSED RULES	
Address Quality Measurement Alternative ,	
76930–76931 [2014–29943]	[TEXT] [PDF]



Bloomberg: Outside a brick-and-mortar sorting facility in suburban Atlanta, UPS has built its own Christmas village. It's functional, if not festive: the company welded together aluminum segments and placed them atop a poured concrete floor to create a makeshift package-sorting facility in an employee parking lot. Inside, conveyor belts whisk packages toward the gaping delivery bays and awaiting delivery trucks. These "mobile distribution center villages" deployed around the U.S. are designed to help avert a repeat of last year's Christmas delays that saw thousands of gifts delivered a day or more late. United Parcel Service Inc. (UPS) is in crunch time. It expects six days this month to surpass its single-busiest shipping day of last year.

Biztech Africa: The Chief Executive Officer of the BotswanaPost, Pele Moleta, has raised a red flag in the way the Botswana Communications and Regulation authority (BOCRA) has 'been unfairly treating' the entity. In an interview with this publication, Moleta said although the BOCRA regulations stipulates that all Postal and Courier service providers in the country should be regulated, it is surprising that it is only the BotswanaPost that which is being regulated thus.

Post & Parcel: Polish Post has launched its first ever digital service on behalf of a government organisation. Trusted Profile is an identity verification service that forms part of the government's electronic Public Administration Services Platform (ePUAP). Launched as a pilot programme, it will see citizens setting up their own trusted digital profile, with their identity verified by a visit to a physical post office and the presenting of an ID card. Once a Trusted Profile has been set up, citizens will be able to access government services online, including social security payment services or the setting up of businesses.

Deutsche Welle: The Japanese government plans to sell a stake in Japan Post Holdings in a public offering next September, according to reports. An announcement is expected on Friday. Japan Post Holdings, which is 100-percent controlled by the government, runs a network of more than 20,000 post offices as well as the country's biggest banking and insurance operations. The Nikkei business daily reported that the government plans to release some 10 percent of the outstanding shares of each unit in an initial public offering (IPO). The group's net assets are estimated to stand at around 14 trillion yen (\$116.73 billion). The three units could be valued at up to 700 billion yen, according to the newspaper.



Office of the Inspector General:


- Hiring Practices in the U.S. Virgin Islands -- What The OIG Found** Overall, the hiring practices for the Postal Support Employee laborer custodial positions in St. Croix and St. Thomas were adequate to ensure fairness to applicants. In total, seven applicants were hired to fill the Postal Support Employee laborer custodial positions in St. Croix and St. Thomas in 2014. Further, in the past 10 years, 12 people were hired for various Postal Service positions in St. Croix, including four from the seven hired in 2014. Although five of these seven positions were eventually filled by residents from the U.S. Virgin Islands, there were inaccuracies and problems in the job announcement process that may have resulted in the perception of improprieties. For example, we found that three job announcements for St. Croix were initially canceled because of an inaccuracy in the announcement or because the test site was unavailable. Also, one announcement for St. Thomas was canceled because of an inaccuracy in the work location. District personnel resolved the errors by issuing three valid announcements. In June 2014, the Human Resources Shared Services Center (HRSSC) took over responsibility for external hiring for the Caribbean District.


HRSSC was given overall responsibility for the entire hiring process from creating job announcements to making job offers. Creating and posting job announcements is now done by a team of three specialists in HRSSC. The HRSSC has standardized procedures to ensure the accuracy of job announcements, including quality review checks and enhanced supervisory oversight. Therefore, we are not making any recommendations at this time, but plan to review the HRSSC in the future.

- [Parcel Readiness– Product Tracking and Reporting System Controls](#)


What The OIG Found The Postal Service needs to improve its process for managing and securing the PTR system. Management did not safeguard eight servers that support the PTR system as required in the Postal Service security standards. Specifically, **management did not apply critical patch updates to the operating system servers and databases. In addition, management did not properly configure the operating system, databases, and the web server to comply with security standards.** Further, we determined the PTR web server contained unsupported software. Management also has not completed the disaster recovery plan for the PTR system. This occurred because management focused on other priorities such as system releases, system maintenance, and Sarbanes-Oxley Act compliance. In addition, due to a vendor software issue, management did not ensure that security configurations were reviewed on the web application server. **These security weaknesses create the potential for a malicious user to gain access to the PTR database, which could result in disclosure or modification of sensitive customer data, loss of PTR system availability, and financial liabilities. In addition, these weaknesses could allow unauthorized access to personally identifiable information, such as home addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses contained within PTR.**


What The OIG Recommended We recommended that management apply all relevant security patches to the PTR operating system servers and databases, and configure the operating system servers and databases to comply with security standards. Management should also update the PTR web server software as required, and complete the disaster recovery plan.

 [The Queensland Times](#): Australia Post will introduce a two-tiered delivery system based on the one already used by its business customers. The plan will see a higher-priced speedy priority service and a cheaper service which will take up to two days more. Postal services executive general manager Christine Corbett said Australia Post could lose more than \$6 billion over the next 10 years without reform. She said there was no decision yet on the cost of the new delivery system or stamp price rises, but concession card holders would be immune from the latter for two years.


 [Haaretz](#): A plan to rescue Israel Post through a package of reforms and cutbacks announced with great fanfare last October is already foundering, with sources saying that consumers may end up being socked with higher rates while efficiency measures are jettisoned.


December 22, 2014


 [Sen. Thomas Carper](#): As the 113th Congress ends, Senator Tom Carper (D-Del.), Chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, renewed his call for Congressional action on comprehensive postal reform and called on the incoming 114th Congress to make the issue a top priority: "More than 200 years after its founding, the Postal Service remains an important part of our lives and economy. But it continues to face financial challenges that threaten its future. For years, the Postal Service has worked hard to compete in the age of the Internet – keeping prices as low as possible, reducing its fixed costs, and innovating where it can. But its leadership can only do so much without new authorities from Congress, and without hurting service quality. Congress needs to free the Postal Service of its financial and legislation constraints and give it the opportunity to modernize and grow through innovation."


 [Wall Street Journal](#): United Parcel Service Inc. all year has been focused on one day above the rest: Monday Dec. 22, when it will deliver 34 million packages, more than any other in its history. It is a big test for the delivery giant after last year's embarrassing and costly holiday debacle in which millions of packages didn't arrive in time for Christmas. To avoid a recurrence, UPS has spent about \$500 million preparing for the holidays with projects including automated sorting systems to rapidly identify ZIP Codes and swiftly reroute packages in the event

of bad weather. That automated system—known as its "Next Generation Sort Aisle"—is now operating at three hubs around the country. The new technology scans packages and quickly flashes instructions to workers so they can process 15% more packages a day, or as many as 47,000 parcels an hour, as measured at one of the hubs.


 [Stabley Times](#): The iPod touch 6th generation is still officially in the ether, with Apple having offered nary a peep about its next-gen MP3 player and having failed to update it in time for the holiday gift buying frenzy. That's left would-be buyers scratching their heads wondering just when the release date is coming, and looking for clues across the board. The first comes in the form of the availability of Apple's A8 chip. The second may come from, of all the unlikely sources, the USPS post office. Stabley Times learned that at least some United States Postal Service locations have begun using the iPod touch as a handheld scanning device for checking out customers as recently as this month. That means USPS is making purchases of the iPod touch 5th generation model as we speak. Is this a matter of the post office knowing something that we don't when it comes to the arrival of the iPod touch 6, or does USPS just not care about waiting for the new model?


 [Herald](#): Businessman Bobby Kerr is offering his know-how to An Post in order to secure a future for the country's post offices. The former Dragon's Den investor will take up the position of independent chairman of the new Post Office Network Business Development Group.


 [Killeen Daily Herald](#): For the last six years, Toby Holder has worked as a part-time, rural carrier for the U.S. Postal Service in Killeen. But the contract he signed with USPS turned out to be more than a part-time job, he said, as budget constraints and short staffing created an atmosphere of mistreatment, unsafe conditions and pay issues. "They treat us like junk mail," Holder said. The choice of phrasing isn't lost on Holder, as the USPS is becoming increasingly reliant on revenue from catalogs, advertisements and other unsolicited items as personal mail declines.


 [Irish Examiner](#): An Post will no longer have to operate collection and delivery services on certain days around major public holidays, including Christmas and Easter, from 2015. The postal regulator, ComReg, has sanctioned the company's application to cut back on services over holiday weekends due to low volumes of mail. An Post had sought a derogation from its obligations as the "universal service provider" in a bid to reduce high staffing costs associated with arranging collections and deliveries around public holidays.

December 21, 2014


 [WISH](#): Even though it's Sunday, some post office branches will be open and the U.S. Postal Service says it will be delivering packages. The Postal Service typically shuts down on Sundays, but officials say they are working seven days a week through Christmas Day to get holiday shipments out on time.


 [Postalnews.com](#): Mark Dimondstein talked about U.S. Postal Service changes scheduled for 2015 which would not only affect delivery but and lead to the reduction of 7,000 jobs. He discussed his efforts to keep these changes from occurring and the future of the postal services as more people conduct communications and commerce over the Internet.

 [Los Angeles Times](#): "Who's getting mail at night?" said Carter, 45. An increasing number of residents both in Los Angeles and across the nation are asking that question as they deal with more nighttime visits from postal workers. An audit published earlier this year by the Postal Service said that mail delivery after 5 p.m. is becoming an increasing problem in some parts of the country and cited staffing shortages as the main reason. The audit found that Washington, D.C., and parts of Atlanta and Miami had some of the highest rates of night deliveries. Concerns about night deliveries are not new. In 2006, residents in neighborhoods both on the Westside and in other parts of L.A. complained for weeks about deliveries that sometimes continued as late as 11 p.m. Some people have reported problems including mail that was delivered to the wrong address, or mail delivered as late as 10 p.m. Neighbors said they missed bills — but did get demands for late payment. The night deliveries had some worried about stolen packages.

 [Mongtomery Advertiser](#): A new study by online deal site RetailMeNot found that more than half of all Christmas shoppers will wait until the final week to finish buying. Nearly 20 percent hadn't started shopping at all until Saturday.

December 20, 2014


 [USAToday](#): Two of Lance Armstrong's longtime business associates have agreed to pay \$500,000 to the United States government as part of a conditional settlement in a lawsuit filed by former Armstrong teammate Floyd Landis. Landis filed his suit under seal in 2010, accusing Armstrong and others of defrauding the U.S. government when Armstrong was riding for the U.S. Postal Service cycling team. The U.S. government joined Landis' suit last year, claiming the USPS would not have paid more than \$30 million to sponsor Armstrong's cycling team if it had known the team was violating its contracts by doping. Under the False Claims Act, the damages could be tripled to nearly \$100 million, with Landis getting a possible cut of it as the whistleblower who filed the case.


 [E MarketDaily](#): United Parcel Service, Inc. reported on Thursday that it has decided to terms with Poland-based investment fund ORTIE to purchase its pharmaceutical logistics company Poltraf Sp. z o.o.; terms not revealed. UPS anticipates to complete the transaction in the first half of 2015, subject to customary closing conditions.


 **Office of the Inspector General:** [Extra Hours Worked by Supervisors in the Greater Indiana District](#)


What the OIG Found At the six post offices we visited, 13 of the 21 (62 percent) EAS Level 17 supervisors did not always record extra hours worked. In addition, management improperly deleted and/or changed clock ring entries for 10 of the 21 supervisors (48 percent). Furthermore, management did not always enter missed clock rings, which are entries that are recorded in the time and attendance system. Supervisors believed management would not authorize extra hours worked unless approved in advance; therefore, the supervisors did not submit their extra hours worked. However, management can authorize extra hours worked without prior approval. In addition, management did not provide adequate oversight of and comply with time and attendance policies and procedures. In September 2014, management issued a memorandum to all district EAS employees emphasizing the importance of accurately recording workhours. If hours worked are not accurately recorded and policies and procedures are not followed, employees may not be properly paid. This could affect both employee morale and performance and subject the Postal Service to substantial legal and/or grievance costs.


What the OIG Recommended We recommended management implement procedures to ensure supervisors properly record hours worked. We also recommended management monitor justifications for changes to clock ring entries, ensure information from the appropriate forms are entered into the time and attendance system, and ensure forms to support disallowed time are prepared and retained. Finally, we recommended management investigate supervisors' claims of unpaid hours worked.

 [Politico](#): Time and People magazine are planning to cut their circulation guarantees to advertisers, AdAge reports. Time is cutting its circulation guarantee by 250,000 copies per issue, down to 3 million. People will take a smaller cut of just 50,000 issues, down to 3.425 million. The magazines, both owned by Time Inc., recognized that large subscriber bases, including those given away almost for free on the idea that they'd bring in more advertisers, aren't translating into big profits anymore. Meanwhile, the magazines have been investing in the digital sphere and are seeing better results. According to AdAge, Time.com's unique monthly visitors increased 26 percent over the past year while People.com's increased by 99 percent.


 [Mobile Industry Review](#): *Editor's Note: Believe it or not, the 160 character limit for SMS was chosen by its creator because that was about the same number of characters used with messages on postcards. There were 8 trillion SMS messages sent last year. Imagine if they were all postcards.*


 [Mobile Storm](#): The Better Business Bureau is setting its sights on advertisers who are not in compliance with required privacy disclosures for their digital marketing campaigns. The BBB, however, is drawing particular attention to native ads. The organization's Online Interest-Based Advertising Accountability Program just published a "compliance warning" this week noting that companies fusing Interest-Based Advertising (IBA) with native ads "must provide consumers with transparency and control, just as they would with any other interest-based ad." The BBB will effectively start enforcing the Native Advertising Compliance Warning on January 1, 2015. *[EdNote: Native ads don't get ignored like traditional ads... because they don't look like ads; they look like content. The stuff that entertains, informs or inspires.]*


 [Mobile Marketing Watch](#): Market research has been an important component of business since the first merchant defined the first target customer. Over the years, the methods have evolved, but at its core, market research has always been about identifying market opportunities and customer preferences. This has become more of a challenge for companies now that there are hundreds of thousands of new sites, apps, services and products coming to the market every day. The pace of commerce is much quicker today and more mobile-focused. Companies that still rely on traditional focus groups and market research labs find it difficult to get accurate, actionable intelligence that they can apply in real time. But market research is evolving too. Here are five trends that will transform market research in 2015 and beyond.


 [The Telegraph](#): Thousands of children are resorting to mobile phone "txt speak" in the classroom amid growing concerns over standards of writing, according to research. Figures show more than one-in-six boys in primary education employs mobile phone text message abbreviations such as "lol", "gr8", "l8r" and "b4" in their school work. Boys are considerably more likely to shun conventional grammar and spelling than girls as the lines between formal and informal writing become increasingly blurred, it emerged. The National Literacy Trust insisted that the reliance on technology among boys was indicative of a wider gulf in standards between the sexes, with boys also less likely to write in their spare time outside school. Researchers warned boys were increasingly "embarrassed" to be seen writing.


December 19, 2014

 [LibDemVoice](#): An independent report by Lord Myners published today has concluded Vince Cable and the Government made "the right decisions" during the process of selling off Royal Mail.

 [Director](#): "Ofcom has rejected Royal Mail's claim that rival operators jeopardise its ability to offer a universal postal service. Should the group be shielded from new entrants to the sector?"

 [Wall Street Journal](#): This year, for the first time, U.S. customers interacted with their banks more through mobile devices than any other means, according to a new study by consultancy Bain & Co. Mobile interactions are now 35% of the total, more than any other type, including traditional online channels, automated-teller machines and branch visits, the report showed. The report, to be distributed Friday, highlights a major shift in how banks engage with their customers—one that the firms hope will help them build loyalty among some of their most valued clients. In recent years, most of the nation's big banks have emphasized their digital offerings while closing branches and making newer branches smaller in an effort to cut costs. But the Bain report also indicated that banks that go all-in on digital do so at their own peril. "Digital-only" customers scored lower on a loyalty and engagement scale than those who only visited branches or used a combination of branches and digital channels. Digital-only customers also purchased fewer products than those that connect with banks through a combination of digital channels and physical branches.

 [Patch](#): Expecting packages shipped to your home this holiday season? You're not the only one... scammers are, too. We've learned of a phony "delivery failure notification" email making the rounds. It looks like it's from the U.S. Postal Service — but it's not. The email says you missed a delivery. But, it says, if you print the attached form and take it to your local post office, you can pick up your package and avoid penalties. The message might also include a link for more details. Here's the truth: the email is bogus and there is no package. And if you download the attachment or click on a link, you're likely to end up with a virus or malware on your device. Con artists often use the names and logos of familiar organizations to get under your guard.


 [DutchNews](#): Postal delivery company PostNL must continue to give regional business post companies access to its network of delivery points, sorting offices and delivery workers, the Dutch consumer association ACM said on Friday. The ACM based its preliminary decision on an analysis of the postal market, and said PostNL cannot differentiate between post from its own clients and its competitors. The ACM says regional providers are important because as competitors to PostNL, they allow business companies to benefit from better service and lower costs. However, they are dependent on PostNL for deliveries outside their own network. PostNL is the only company with a nationwide network, the ACM said. Read more at DutchNews.nl: PostNL told to give regional competitors access to its network <http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2014/12/postnl-told-to-give-regional-competitors-access-to-its-network.php/>




Office of the Inspector General: [Capital District Vulnerability Assessment](#)


What The OIG Found Security controls in the Capital District did not adequately protect Postal Service infrastructure and data from unauthorized access or corruption. Of the 1,254 systems active on the network, we tested 33 and detected a combined total of 417 vulnerabilities, such as missing security updates or system configuration deficiencies. Of the 417 vulnerabilities, 79 were considered critical and high-risk for which patches were available for at least 1 year. We further identified four active [redacted], and two shared user accounts. These vulnerabilities expose the infrastructure to unauthorized remote access by potential attackers who may discover network weaknesses, retrieve information, corrupt data, and reconfigure settings. The Capital District also permits access to devices using unsecure communications, which further threatens network security. Finally, we identified weaknesses in asset management and accountability that could allow an unauthorized device to remain on the network undetected. These vulnerabilities occurred because administrators improperly configured systems, did not install the latest patch updates, and did not employ uniform processes to manage information system assets.


What The OIG Recommended We recommended management evaluate, test, and install critical patches and correct configuration settings on the identified databases and operating systems. We also recommended management disallow software that permits unsecure communications, discontinue the use of shared user accounts, and uniformly manage assets. Additionally, we recommended management remove the [redacted] from databases.


 [eCommerceBytes](#): USPS trucks are pulling up to front doors on Sundays to deliver holiday orders to Amazon shoppers. But some postal workers say it's too much to handle.

December 18, 2014

 [The Street](#): "Would You Invest In The U.S. Postal Service?"

 [Wall Street Journal](#): Amazon.com on Thursday introduced Prime Now, a service in Manhattan promising delivery in as soon as one hour. The service, first reported by The Wall Street Journal, is available in parts of New York, though Amazon said it would expand to other cities next year. Amazon will charge \$7.99 for delivery within an hour, though two-hour delivery is free, according to a statement.


 [Post & Parcel](#): Governors at the US Postal Service have voted to maintain their decision-making powers despite the fact that the Senate has left the Board without a required quorum of six members. Last week the Postal Service saw its chairman Mickey Barnett coming to the end of his first term as a USPS Governor, leaving only three independent governors plus the Postmaster General and Deputy Postmaster General on the board. Barnett is up for re-appointment, along with four other candidates to fill vacant seats on the Board, which is supposed to have nine members. So far the US Senate has not been able to confirm candidates put forward.


 [CBS Sacramento](#): Wednesday was the busiest delivery day of the year. This holiday season, package deliveries are up by about 12 percent, but also on the rise are package thefts. A lot of people are asking the question: How can


you protect yourself from delivery theft? CBS13's Anjali Hemphill has answers. A real-life Scrooge walks up to a Stockton porch in broad daylight and makes off with their Christmas gifts. Postal service spokesman Gus Ruiz says as more and more people are taking advantage of shopping online, thieves are taking advantage as well. "These parcel pirates are following these truck, and as soon as they drop off a parcel at a doorstep and they see that it is unattended, they will swoop in, take it and off they go," said Ruiz.




[Dead Tree Edition](#): With some parliamentary maneuvering, the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors has apparently avoided the need to raise postage rates sooner than it wanted. A key deadline for the rumored hurry-up rate hikes passed today when the Consumer Price Index numbers for November were announced.

 [Roll Call](#): The U.S. Government Printing Office has officially become the Government Publishing Office, after President Barack Obama signed the year-end "cromnibus" spending package late Tuesday night. "This is a historic day for GPO. Publishing defines a broad range of services that includes print, digital, and future technological advancements," the agency's director, Davita Vance-Cooks, said in a statement Wednesday. "The name Government Publishing Office better reflects the services that GPO currently provides and will provide in the future."

 [This Is Money](#): The way that the Government sells shares should be overhauled after taxpayers were left short-changed following the Royal Mail privatisation, a government-backed report will today say. Former City minister Lord Myners was asked to probe the process after accusations that the public missed out on £1billion during the controversial sale.

 [Consumer Reports](#): We put FedEx, UPS, and the U.S. Postal Service to the test to see which can get your packages to their destinations most economically and quickly. Get [details on our review](#), below, and find out [whether expedited shipping is worth the splurge](#).

 [The Folsom Telegraph](#): According to a resident in the neighborhood, eight cluster mailboxes were broken into on Porter Road and Porter Court early last week. On Sunday, three more were targeted on Hildebrand Circle. It is believed that the criminal used a crowbar to empty the mailboxes.

December 17, 2014



At the Postal Regulatory Commission:

12-Month Average Change in CPI-U
Prepared by Postal Regulatory Commission
Last Update: 12/17/2014

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
2005	2.8%	2.9%	3.0%	3.1%	3.1%	3.0%	3.0%	3.1%	3.3%
2006	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.7%	3.8%	3.9%	3.9%	3.7%
2007	3.1%	3.0%	2.9%	2.8%	2.7%	2.6%	2.4%	2.3%	2.3%
2008	3.0%	3.2%	3.3%	3.4%	3.5%	3.7%	4.0%	4.3%	4.4%
2009	3.5%	3.2%	2.8%	2.4%	1.9%	1.4%	0.8%	0.2%	-0.324%
2010	-0.143%	0.013%	0.236%	0.482%	0.757%	0.968%	1.252%	1.477%	1.685%
2011	1.559%	1.557%	1.589%	1.668%	1.799%	2.008%	2.208%	2.426% ^{4/}	2.653%
2012	3.263%	3.326%	3.322%	3.248%	3.090%	2.930%	2.743%	2.570% ^{5/}	2.415%
2013	1.960%	1.887%	1.789% ^{6/}	1.686%	1.657%	1.664%	1.710%	1.696% ^{7/}	1.628%
2014	1.495%	1.393%	1.396%	1.471%	1.535%	1.562%	1.565%	1.580%	1.620%

1/ Price cap for Docket No. R2008-1

2/ Price cap for Docket No. R2009-2

3/ Price cap for Docket No. R2011-2


4/ Partial Year Price cap for Docket No. R2012-3 equals 2.133 percent


5/ Price cap for Docket No. R2013-1


6/ Special Services Partial Year Price cap for Docket No. R2013-7 equals 1.063 percent

7/ Price cap for Docket No. R2013-10 for First-Class Mail, Standard Rate equals 1.636 percent
 Partial Year price cap for Special Services equals 0.636 percent

- Market Dominant Billing Determinants FY 2014 Quarter 4
http://www.prc.gov/docs/90/90936/LETTER_MDBD%20PUBLIC_20141217153104_.pdf
http://www.prc.gov/docs/90/90936/Q4_2.zip

 **Bloomberg:** Prices paid by American consumers dropped in November by the most in almost six years, providing a boost to buying power that will propel economic growth. The cost of living fell 0.3 percent, the most since December 2008, after being little changed the prior month, according to Labor Department figures issued today in Washington. The retreat was led by a plunge in fuel that is continuing to unfold.


 **Roll Call:** If incoming Chairman Jason Chaffetz made just one thing clear Tuesday, it's this: The Oversight and Government Reform Committee is not Darrell Issa's anymore — in fact, Issa won't even be on the committee next year. Chaffetz gathered roughly a dozen reporters in his new Rayburn office Tuesday to discuss the 114th Congress and his vision for the Oversight panel, one that focuses less on political scandals and more on the "government reform" part. And it was evident to everyone present the Utah Republican has a dramatically different vision for the panel than that of his predecessor. "Sometimes you just want a different approach," Chaffetz said. "And again, it's not to say that the other one was bad, I just wouldn't do it that way." Chaffetz said 60 percent of the roughly 60-person staff for the panel will be new in the 114th Congress, meaning many of the old committee hands will be looking for jobs. That didn't seem to bother Chaffetz. Asked where those staffers would end up, the new chairman had a short response: "Hopefully somewhere good." Chaffetz defended the personnel changes, and he said turnover was part of the process for a committee with a new chairman. Part of that reshuffle, Chaffetz said, would be a more collaborative approach with Democrats on the committee, though Chaffetz isn't quite making any promises in that regard. He suggested it was likely Republicans would still issue subpoenas without Democrats' approval and he said Republicans on the committee would probably issue even more partisan reports. "Darrell Issa didn't do many reports," Chaffetz said. "[He] did big press releases."


 **Post & Parcel:** E-commerce giant Amazon is partnering with Spain's national postal service to provide its customers with "click and collect" points across the country. Amazon, which has already linked up with the state-owned post office network in the UK to provide click and collect services, will now offer 2,400 Correos post offices as collection points for its customers in Spain. The move will triple the size of Amazon's existing network of collection points in Spain, with the post offices joining Amazon's existing network of local shops providing collection services. The online retailer said collection points had become a preferred delivery option for many consumers and that the network of thousands of post offices would provide maximum convenience for consumers.




What The OIG Found The Postal Service needs to improve controls over MTE operations and transportation at the Atlanta MTEESC and associated processing facilities. Management did not adequately control contractor processing, invoicing, and repair and handling of MTE or monitor contractor performance; and did not always secure its operations. In addition, none of the processing facilities complied with MTE policies and were sending unprocessed and improperly prepared MTE to the Atlanta MTEESC. Processing facilities were also not always inspecting MTE for mail before sending it to the Atlanta MTEESC, causing delayed or undelivered mail. These conditions occurred because the Postal Service did not provide sufficient oversight to ensure compliance with its policies. Finally, facilities lacked adequate resources, management prioritized processing mail over managing MTE, and ongoing operational changes and realignment of the processing network caused inefficiencies in MTE transportation. Because of issues associated with the Atlanta MTEESC, the Postal Service incurred an estimated \$936,000 and \$760,000 in unnecessary costs in fiscal years 2012 and 2013, respectively. It could also avoid about \$848,000 annually over the next 2 years by providing adequate oversight and ensuring compliance with policies.

What The OIG Recommended We recommended the vice presidents, Network Operations and Supply Management, establish adequate controls over contractor performance and ensure MTE is protected. We also recommended the vice president, Network Operations, in coordination with vice presidents, Eastern, Capital Metro, and Southern area operations, ensure compliance with policies for proper ordering, handling, and transporting MTE; and reassess MTE transportation requirements to ensure efficiency

 **The Guardian:** The Nigeria Postal Service sector may have added about N289.7 billion to the economy within the last four years. Besides, the sector was able to deliver about 285 million mails across the country and created about 34,500 jobs directly and indirectly within the same period. Specifically, a statistics obtained on NIPOST showed that the sector recorded in 2014 N103.3 billion from 127 million mail deliveries and created 10, 000 jobs. In 2013, it generated N87.7 billion from the delivery of 89 million mails.


 **PYMNTS:** Amazon has given last-minute online shoppers a couple more days to get that holiday list checked off. Last year's free-shipping deadline was Dec. 17, but this year Amazon said its free shipping deadline to have items arrive by Christmas Eve has been extended to Dec. 19. That gives those procrastinators until 11:59 p.m. EST to finalize shopping on the site, but it also keeps Amazon on the same competitive edge major retailers are attempting to reach in the e-Commerce market this holiday season.


 **The News:** Private post operator InPost has won yet another government tender against state-owned Poczta Polska (Polish Post). The tender is to provide postal services to national institutions such as ministries, local governments and others. Out of the 38 public tenders submitted by InPost between June to September, the company won 27. This is considered a hard blow to Polish Post which has found it hard to compete in terms of price. However, in a talk with Polish Radio, Przemyslaw Sypniewski, head of the independent Postal Institute said that other factors might be at stake. InPost was founded in 2006 and is Poland's largest private post operator.

 **From the Federal Register:**

Postal Regulatory Commission	
NOTICES	
New Postal Products ,	
75190 [2014-29461]	[TEXT] [PDF]


Postal Service	
RULES	
New Standards to Enhance Business Reply Mail Visibility ,	
75058–75059 [2014–29479]	[TEXT] [PDF]
NOTICES	
Product Changes:	
Priority Mail Negotiated Service Agreement ,	
75190 [2014–29477]	[TEXT] [PDF]

 [WDEL](#): One political website reported Senator Carper attempted, but fell short, in efforts to attach a major overhaul of the United States Postal Service to that massive budget legislation. Certainly, an overhaul is long overdue to assist USPS in this rapidly changing world of telecommunications. Whether Carper's proposed overhaul makes sense is another question. (One provision was supposedly a move AWAY from door-to-door delivery in favor of cluster boxes.) But what is most interesting - from this account in GOVERNMENT EXECUTIVE magazine on line - is for all Carper's talk about the need to compromise, the senator resisted compromise on his own vision for USPS, and in the process, lost some of his fellow Dems. (Although that narrative is fiercely disputed. And again, Carper's office maintains the senator never tried to attach such an overhaul of USPS to "Cromnibus'.)

 [Delaware1059](#): New legislation pushed by Delaware Senator Tom Carper to revamp the United States Postal Service gets killed by Congress. Senator Carper's alleged proposal to tuck an overhaul of USPS into a spending bill initially cleared the Senate but failed to make it through the house, so the senator opted for unanimous consent to move the motion along. Government Executive magazine Correspondent Eric Katz called the move an attempt to "strong arm" his fellow democrats. But Carper says the bill has garnered wide bipartisan support, but even one senator's refusal and the legislation is nixed. Carper says he will continue to push for restructuring the postal service in 2015.




[United Parcel Service](#): UPS Chief Executive Officer David Abney today announced changes to several of the company's senior leadership assignments to enhance management focus on the company's strategic growth and organizational effectiveness.

 [Transport Intelligence](#): FedEx is letting it be known they are serious about e-commerce and plans to be a major global provider of e-commerce logistics services. In a matter of just two days, the company took steps towards this goal and made two significant acquisitions – Genco, a well-known returns management specialist and Bongo International, a provider of cross-border e-commerce IT solutions. On average, about 30% of all online transactions are returned and with Genco handling an average of 600m returns a year, Genco seems to be a good fit for FedEx particularly as the company expects to handle a record 290m packages this holiday season. In addition, FedEx announced the acquisition of Bongo International. According to the Wall Street Journal, Bongo assists e-commerce and other retailers with duty and tax calculations, export compliance management, currency conversions, international payment options inclusive of language translation, shopping cart management and fraud protection.




At the Postal Regulatory Commission:


- **Mailing Services (Market Dominant Products) Revenue, Pieces & Weight by Classes of Mail and Special Services** for Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 and Summary FY2014 http://www.prc.gov/docs/90/90911/Letter%20RPW%2012-16-2014_20141216154309.pdf
http://www.prc.gov/docs/90/90911/USPS_FY14-42.zip

 [Geekwire](#): The U.S. Postal Service is straining to keep up with the volume of packages being delivered on Sundays, with some carriers complaining of 12-hour days and weeks without a single day off. The flood of packages can be traced back to Amazon, which kicked off a partnership with the USPS more than a year ago to deliver parcels seven days a week. Now, especially with the holidays underway, there are signs that the rollout hasn't gone as smoothly as some would have liked. Dozens of USPS workers have sent messages to GeekWire and commented on


past stories, outlining their concerns. Many say they are being asked to work 60 hours a week, sometimes for up to 21 straight days.


 **PRNewswire:** The Taxpayers Protection Alliance (TPA) today released a damning video calling on the cash-strapped U.S. Postal Service (USPS) to immediately halt expanded offerings it cannot afford and return to its government-chartered mission to dependably deliver First Class mail. Despite decades of precedent in which the USPS faithfully met its obligation, TPA views the agency today a shell of itself – misguided by inept leadership, wasteful and reckless spending, and highly problematic business ventures such as grocery delivery and seven day parcel services. As the video documents, basic mail is suffering alongside market expansion, increasing at least from 2.14 to 2.25 days on average and making it harder for Americans to send and receive mail on time.


December 16, 2014

 **The Hill:** Facing the lack of a quorum, the U.S. Postal Service's governing body has voted to allow itself to keep governing anyway. USPS's board voted in November to create a temporary emergency committee composed of the active governors to take the helm of the agency if the board lost its quorum, according to a notice in the Federal Register. The board did end up losing its quorum last week, and is currently one short of the six governors needed to conduct business. Agency officials and senators are hopeful the Senate will confirm at least one of the five nominees ready for floor consideration in short order, but there's no guarantee that will happen before the chamber breaks for 2014. According to the Federal Register notice, the temporary emergency committee would have all "powers needed to provide for continuity of operations." The board of governors, among other things, controls the Postal Service's budget and makes long-term plans for the agency, which lost \$5 billion in the most recent fiscal year. "The resolution clarifies that the inability of the board to constitute a quorum does not inhibit or affect the authority of the governors then in office to exercise those powers vested solely in the governors," the Federal Register notice also says.

 **PostCom Members !! The latest issue of the [PostCom Bulletin](#) is available online.** Hey! You've not been getting the weekly PostCom Bulletin--the best postal newsletter anywhere...bar none? [Send us by email](#) your name, company, company title, postal and email address. Get a chance to see what you've been missing.

 **NewsWest9:** Nothing has shown up in John McMaster's Garden City mailbox since last month. He has been waiting for credit card bills, medical records and Christmas packages to be delivered to their home on Ranch Road 33, near Angle Road, where United States Postal Service mail carriers have dropped off letters since his grandfather built the family ranch in 1900. NewsWest 9 contacted the Garden City Postmaster and regional USPS representatives. They had no comment, and could not confirm if delivery to other residences on Ranch Road 33 had also been halted. "Only thing I can figure is [our mail carrier] doesn't want to get his car dirty or he wants to cut a few miles off and get off [work] early," said McMaster, who now drives about 18 miles to the Garden City Post Office to pick up his mail. According to a voice message left on McMaster's answering machine Monday by the USPS mail carrier assigned to deliver his mail, "road construction" was interfering with Garden City delivery routes.


 **Post & Parcel:** Starting in early 2015, Jersey Post will be installing parcel lockers in convenient locations across the Island, creating delivery and pick up points where items of mail can be securely held for customers to collect at their own convenience. Customers who want to use the service will need to register with Jersey Post, and provide a mobile phone number to which alerts will be sent. They will then be allocated a unique address to which items will be delivered. Jersey Post is working on the project with ByBox who provide a complete end-to- end solution by manufacturing, installing and managing electronic lockers for the postal industry. The lockers are produced in different sizes to accommodate all types of packages, each one with a secure door that can only be unlocked with a unique pin code.


 **Post & Parcel:** Australia Post is set to launch an independent review of its licensed post office network in the light of the ongoing decline in letter volumes and customer numbers. The national postal service said it was in the process of establishing the terms of reference for the study, which will look into the sustainability of the network.

The review comes in the wake of a Senate inquiry which last September called on Australia Post to rethink its payments for licensed post offices with operators struggling on "subsistence levels of remuneration".

 ***From the Federal Register:***


Postal Regulatory Commission	
NOTICES	
New Postal Products ,	
74778–74779 [2014–29333]	[TEXT] [PDF]
74779–74780 [2014–29338]	[TEXT] [PDF]
74779 [2014–29395]	[TEXT] [PDF]
74778 [2014–29396]	[TEXT] [PDF]
Postal Products; Amendments ,	
74780 [2014–29393]	[TEXT] [PDF]
Postal Service	
NOTICES	
Exercise of Powers Reserved to the Governors and the Board of Governors ,	
74780–74782 [2014–29344]	[TEXT] [PDF]
Product Changes:	
Priority Mail Express Negotiated Service Agreement ,	
74782 [2014–29376]	[TEXT] [PDF]
74782 [2014–29378]	[TEXT] [PDF]
Priority Mail Negotiated Service Agreement ,	
74782 [2014–29377]	[TEXT] [PDF]


 **Government Executive:** Lawmakers attempted a last-minute maneuver to include a major overhaul of the U.S. Postal Service in the spending bill that averted a government shutdown, but several Senate Democrats objected and stymied the effort. A longtime advocate of postal reform both in this Congress and previous sessions, Carper, along with the committee's Ranking Member Tom Coburn, R-Okla., the bill's co-sponsor, renewed his efforts to pass a significant postal bill in the lame duck session. At that meeting, an aide told Government Executive, Carper showed no interest in compromise, instead telling members it was his bill or nothing. Carper attempted to strengthen his position by threatening to allow the Postal Service to follow through on its plan to shutter 82 processing plants next year, which will lead to loss of at least 7,000 jobs and the relocation of even more. Fifty-one senators and 160 House representatives previously signed a letter to prevent USPS from moving forward with the consolidations through the appropriations process, but the final CROmnibus does not include such a prohibition. Instead, the report on the bill "encouraged" the Postal Service to delay the closures. When the lawmakers at last week's meeting told Carper it was too late to move forward with such a sweeping bill and said they should instead focus on preventing the facility closures, an aide said Carper rejected the proposal. In fact, Carper said those who opposed him would bear the blame for the consolidations.


 **Office of the Inspector General:** [The U. S. Postal Service's Role as Infrastructure](#) -- Throughout its history, the U.S. Postal Service has been part of the nation's vital infrastructure, facilitating economic activity, improving quality of life, and benefiting wider society in a variety of ways. But the Postal Service is also mandated to operate like a business, which can pose challenges to its public service mission. The resulting tension between the two was easier to manage when postal revenues were sufficient to fully cover the agency's costs and obligations. But today, the Digital Age is cutting into the volume of the product that contributes more than half of the funds to support the network: First-Class Mail. And this strain has led to more tension between the Postal Service as a public service provider and as a business. Moreover, new technologies and global commerce are changing the nation's


infrastructure needs. The Postal Service would benefit from more clarity about what it should offer in this evolving environment. Our white paper, [The Postal Service's Role as Infrastructure](#), presents three broad options the Postal Service and its stakeholders could consider when deciding how to adapt the Postal Service's role for the future. These options are not mutually exclusive. But they should be evaluated together so all potential uses are recognized and accounted for as part of major changes to the size and scope of the Postal Service's infrastructure.


December 15, 2014

 **ABC:** An over-supply of packages is today's biggest concern for the U.S. Postal Service, which is bracing for the annual Christmas gift rush. This is expected to be its busiest day of the year, with more than 640 million cards, letters and packages being processed. Package delivery firms UPS and FedEx spent around a billion dollars each to upgrade facilities and vehicles, and to hire more temporary workers. Last year, rough weather and an increase in online shopping caused delays. Some gifts were not delivered in time for Christmas.


 **PostCom Members!** The December 2014 [PostCom Quarterly](#), a publication that is written by mailers for mailers, is now available online. The focus is bringing the mailing industry the latest in postal news you can use in your pursuit of using mail as an important part of the way your company communicates and does business.

 **The Hill:** Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) is making a final push to wrap up the 113th Congress and bring an end to eight years of Democratic control of the upper chamber. Before senators can head to the airport, they need to vote on 23 of President Obama's nominees and pass a one-year extension of expired tax cuts.


 **Independent Political Report:** Liberation Radio, The Party for Socialism and Liberation's own weekly radio program, interviewed Ken Lerch, President of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) Local 3825, to discuss the urgent crisis. "On January 5th, the Postal Service is planning on consolidating and closing 82 huge mail processing and distribution centers," Local NALC President Ken Lerch told Liberation Radio host Ernesto Aguilar to start the 30-minute program, "What I think is going on, and many other people think also, is there's too much support from the American people for the Post Office just to be privatized. They're trying to – Donahoe and some other very influential people – are trying to destroy the Postal Service from within."

 **Hetq:** HayPost and Russian Post signed an important Agreement in order to implement "Forsage" express money transfers system between Armenia and Russia. According to the Agreement, HayPost and Russian Post will connect their Post Offices, 44,000 in Russia and 900 in Armenia, through "Forsage" system. This system, new for the Armenian market, will allow the population to send and receive money transfers fast and at very competitive rates from any Post Office in Russia to any Post Office in Armenia and viceversa, including those in the most remote rural areas. The operations are planned to be launched in the first quarter of 2015.

December 14, 2014

 **Android Headlines:** Well everyone, the holiday season is coming up fast for many of us, and the holidays often translates to travel nowadays, so it's probably almost time to deal with the trouble of postage for shipping gifts and having your mail held while you're away from home. That last part is what some people, (probably more than you might think actually) forget to do, and the United States Postal Service is here to help with their mobile app. Now, the app is fairly basic. It's got a facility locator, a ZIP code finder, a price calculator for your packaging and shipping needs, a tracking features, an at-location pick-up option and form to fill out, a portal of the USPS's shipping supplies store of Flat Rate boxes and envelopes, a barcode scanner, a coupon section, and finally a mail holding option.

 **Malta Independent:** National postal carrier MaltaPost has reported a 37.5 per cent increase in profits before taxation for the financial year ended on 30 September 2014.

 **Global Times:** "The changing face of the post office in Shanghai"

[Springfield News-Leader](#): Senators Roy Blunt and Claire McCaskill earlier this month joined a group of 30 senators asking the U.S. Postal Service to delay the closing of 82 mail processing facilities — among them, a processing center in Springfield which is currently scheduled to close next month. As many as 200 local employees could lose their jobs if the Springfield center closes. The closures are part of a large scale restructuring for USPS, which the News-Leader reported on last week, in an attempt to respond to a dramatic decline in stamped mail — more than 50 percent in the last 10 years. The current system was built for the peak mail volume and revenue, according to Stacy St. John, a spokeswoman for the postal service. St. John says that the restructuring is necessary. She says people don't use stamped mail service as much as they used to because they've moved much of the communication to digital formats. Even after the closure of more than 300 other facilities, stamped mail service is losing money.


December 13, 2014


[Politico](#): Senate Democrats also lose two seats on the Joint Economic Committee, which is a shared panel with the House, and the Senate Special Committee on Aging. Meanwhile, Senate Democrats will lose just one seat on the following panels: Finance, Foreign Relations, Intelligence, Judiciary, Small Business and Veterans Affairs. The powerful Appropriations panel picks up three new members: Sens. Brian Schatz of Hawaii, Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin and Chris Murphy of Connecticut. Sen. Martin Heinrich of New Mexico will join Armed Services, and Sen. Joe Donnelly of Indiana will become a Banking member. Sens. Tom Udall of New Mexico, Joe Manchin of West Virginia and incoming Sen. Gary Peters of Michigan will join Commerce — while Sen. Mazie Hirono of Hawaii, independent Angus King of Maine and Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts are set to join the Energy committee. Peters, as well as Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey, will join the Homeland panel and Hirono will join Intelligence. Sen. Tim Kaine of Virginia will join Aging, while Peters, Hirono and Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware will become Small Business committee members. Veterans Affairs' picks up Manchin, and Peters, the only new member of the Senate Democratic Caucus, also gets a seat on the Joint Economic Committee. The Senate Ethics Committee, which is divided equally between three Democrats and three Republicans, will have two new Democratic members: Schatz and Coons. Senate Republicans are expected to finalize their committee assignments next week.


[Postalnews.com](#): "The Commission does not have a basis for initiating a reassessment of Phase II of the Postal Service's network rationalization initiative at this time. However, NAPS is encouraged to participate in the ACD process if it believes that the Postal Service's service performance goals are not being met."

[Roll Call](#): Senators will reconvene at noon Saturday for a series of up to 40 roll call votes after conservatives sought to force votes to block President Barack Obama's executive actions on immigration before consenting to a final vote on the "cromnibus" to fund the government. The collapse of a potential deal to set the votes on the spending bill for Monday came amid a longstanding feud about nominations, which will now take center stage on Saturday. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., told reporters Saturday's session will feature a lengthy series of procedural votes in order to allow him to file cloture on a number of pending nominations. He said it appeared Republicans would require procedural votes to get in and out of executive session, where he could file the cloture petitions. The GOP, which takes over the majority in January, is loath to make it easy for Democrats to process President Barack Obama's nominations. "Each one, we'll have to do a separate vote," Reid said, without specifying the number of votes. Indications were the Senate could have a vote-a-rama from lunchtime straight past midnight. A senior Senate Democratic aide said Democrats want to confirm about 20 nominees before adjourning for the year.

[Washington Post](#): "An enduring record ignored by The Post" -- *Letter to the editor by Ruth Goldway, Postal Regulatory Commission*. "I cringed at the loaded and inflammatory language, but I was most concerned that there was no effort to hear my side of the story. Only my critics were quoted. No mention was made of my accomplishments over 16 years as a commissioner. I was appointed commissioner by two presidents, a Republican and a Democrat, and I was designated chair by a third. There was no coverage of what I did right to have such an enduring record. Any fair-minded journalist would have considered this . . . It also was a disservice to readers to present a sensationalistic, simplistic view of the meaning of my replacement . . . I told the president more than six months ago that I would not seek another six-year term."

 [The Hill](#): Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) announced Friday evening that GOP senators are poised to agree to pass a \$1.1 trillion omnibus spending bill and a package extending expired tax cuts. "We're very close to being cleared on this side to finish up and I want everybody to understand that it's possible to finish tonight and very shortly we'll be able to announce that there are no impediments toward getting to that goal on our side of the aisle," he said on the floor. But Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) balked because the prospective deal left out President Obama's nominees. Two Republican senators and a Senate GOP aide said a group of executive and judicial branch nominees are the remaining sticking point.


 [Financial Times](#): Hearst Corporation is paying nearly \$2bn to boost its stake in Fitch, the global rating agency, as the media company pushes forward with a plan to diversify from its origins in publishing. Hearst continues to diversify into data and information-based companies while growing its world-class media assets," said Steve Swartz, Hearst chief executive. "We believe the credit rating, financial information and risk management services Fitch provides to the global financial community are critical in today's economy."


 [Walla Walla Union-Bulletin](#): A brouhaha is brewing in the nation's capital over the Senate confirmation for Mickey Barnett's second term on the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors. #Barnett, who is now the chairman of that board, and a former lobbyist for the banking industry, is now seen as controversial because he could block plans for the USPS to go into the payday-loan business. #The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights sees a possible conflict of interest with Barnett because of his past associations. The group urged senators not to confirm Barnett for another term until his position on payday lending is explained. #That's ridiculous. Barnett, who was appointed to the board in 2006 by President George W. Bush, is clearly qualified for the post. He's been doing it for eight years and is now chairman. #Beyond that, his concerns about the USPS going into the payday loan business are valid. #The Postal Service's role is to deliver mail, not become involved in high-interest loan sharking.


December 12, 2014

 **PostCom Members !! The latest issue of the [PostCom Bulletin](#) is available online.** Hey! You've not been getting the weekly PostCom Bulletin--the best postal newsletter anywhere...bar none? [Send us by email](#) your name, company, company title, postal and email address. Get a chance to see what you've been missing.


 **[From the Federal Register](#): Postal Regulatory Commission NOTICES New Postal Products , 73912–73913 [2014–29096] [\[TEXT\]](#)**

 [Post & Parcel](#): Ireland's parcel and freight industry association is preparing to make a complaint to the country's State Ombudsman over the government's handling of the proposed national post code. The "Eircode" is expected to be implemented as the Republic's official post code next year, in a move that has taken years to get this far. But while having a post code is seen as a fundamentally positive thing for the nation's economy — helping emergency services as well as business and the logistics sector — the Freight Trade Association Ireland is objecting to the design of the post code itself.


 [IPP Media](#): The Pan African Postal Union (Papu) on Wednesday called on African countries to expedite the process of setting up physical address system and post codes in major cities and towns because of their significance to regional socio-economic development.

 **Office of the Inspector General: [Sunday Parcel Delivery Service](#) -- What The OIG Found.** Operational inefficiencies existed during Sunday parcel deliveries in scanning, sorting, vehicle loading, and using the DRT software in street delivery at 40 of 134 hubs we visited in four districts. These inefficiencies occurred primarily because management did not always enforce policies and procedures and supervision was inconsistent at some hubs. As a result, the Postal Service spent 17,446 more hours from June 15 through July 13, 2014, than DRT software required to conduct Sunday delivery operations. By improving efficiency, the Postal Service could reduce operating costs annually by \$356,736 for 134 hubs in the districts we visited. **What The OIG Recommended.** We recommended the vice presidents, Eastern, Northeast, Pacific, and Southern areas, direct managers in the Ohio

Valley, Northern New Jersey, San Diego, and Dallas districts to eliminate inefficient operational practices, reduce workhours cited, and ensure adherence to Postal Service policies and procedures for Sunday parcel delivery service.


 **WCJB:** Three months ago, someone knocked down the mailbox that services nine residents in a neighborhood in Haile Plantation. Since then, the residents have had to go to the main facility on 34th street during business hours to get their mail. An official with the Homeowners Association tells TV20 there's nothing they can do, he says it's up to the Postal Service to replace the box, which may take up to six months.


 **Post & Parcel:** The Universal Postal Union has signed a new partnership agreement with the International Air Transport Association to work on various air mail safety initiatives together. The UPU, which represents 192 of the world's postal administrations, said better cooperation with the IATA, which comprises 240 of the world's airlines, will mean improving service levels for both sectors as Posts continue to rely on airlines to provide fast, reliable services. The UN-affiliated UPU said the partnership agreement was signed last month, as a "solid platform" for launching joint initiatives with the IATA.

 **The Hill:** The U.S. Postal Service says it can overcome rain, sleet and heat, but that apparently doesn't account for Senate gridlock. The agency's board of governors lost its quorum this week, with the Senate so far not taking action on six separate nominees to the body that oversees USPS's budget and makes long-term plans for the service. Lawmakers and aides say they hope that the Senate will confirm at least some of the nominees before Congress breaks for the year in the coming days. But both aides and lawmakers say there's no guarantee that will happen, and business interests are also worried that the lack of a quorum could be disruptive for an agency that has lost billions of dollars in recent years. Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.), the chairman of the Senate committee that oversees the Postal Service, said Thursday that he was hopeful that at least some of the five nominees that have cleared his Homeland Security panel would get confirmed this month. "The sun, the moon, the stars are starting to align," Carper told The Hill.


INDUSTRY ALERT **Postal Service Ready for Busiest Mailing Day of the Year More than 640 Million Pieces of Mail Expected Monday.** Monday, Dec. 15, will mark the Postal Service's busiest mailing day of the year with more than 640 million cards, letters and packages expected to be processed. Last year 607 million pieces of mail were delivered during the holiday season, reflecting an increase due to growth in advertising and mail package volume. "We are ready for the rush and ready to deliver," said Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe. "This isn't just our busiest time of year — it's our season. Customers can count on the Postal Service to deliver their holiday gifts in time for Christmas as we have for the past 239 years." The Postal Service is delivering seven days a week in major cities and high volume areas including Christmas Day. Dec. 20 is the deadline to send greeting cards, packages and letters to ensure delivery in time for Christmas. For the last-minute shoppers, Dec. 23 is the deadline for sending packages using Priority Mail Express. Customers can skip the trip to the Post Office altogether and ship online using the Postal Service's website, usps.com. Using [Click-N-Ship](#), customers can print shipping labels for postage. The popular Priority Mail Flat Rate Holiday Boxes virtually eliminate the need to weigh packages. Customers also may request [free package pickup](#) online. The Postal Service will pick up packages as part of regular mail delivery the next business day and, unlike with other shipping companies, there is no fee for this service. The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.


December 11, 2014

 **Postalnews.com:** The omnibus spending bill that appears set for approval by Congress this week continues the long-standing requirement that the USPS continue to deliver mail six days a week. The bill also directs the PMG to report to Congress within 90 days on steps the USPS will take to improve postal worker safety; and encourages (but doesn't require) the USPS to complete impact analysis and outreach before closing any more plants.


 **WBUR:** Now take a look in your mailbox or somewhere around your house. There's a good chance you'll see a shopping catalog, maybe a few of them now that it's the holiday season. So why, in the digital age, are they still around? "Consumers really still love looking at catalogs," says Bruce Cohen, a retail private equity strategist at the management consulting firm Kurt Salmon. We look at them less as selling tools and more as magazines for our

customers. Felix Carbullido, Williams-Sonoma The company published an article called, "Is the Catalog Dead?" and the answer was a definitive no. The number of catalogs mailed in the U.S. peaked in 2007, according to the Direct Marketing Association. It's come down since then, but last year it ticked up again to a whopping 11.9 billion mailed to addresses around the U.S. "And what's interesting about that is you even have purely online companies starting to experiment with printed catalogs," Cohen says. So the death of print is highly exaggerated, at least when it comes to shopping.

 [Memphis Business Journal](#): Teamsters have lost another fight to unionize a FedEx Freight service center, this time in Pocono Summit, Pennsylvania.

 [Wall Street Journal](#): Attention shippers: Today's your last day to get guaranteed ground delivery until after Christmas. That's because, starting tomorrow, both United Parcel Service and FedEx suspend their money-back guarantees for ground delivery times until after Dec. 25. It's a long-standing holiday tradition for the big delivery companies reflecting the surge in package volume as e-commerce — and sweaters from Grandma — take off.

 [From the Federal Register: Postal Regulatory Commission NOTICES New Postal Products , 73651 \[2014-29028\] \[TEXT\]](#)


 [Fairbanks Daily News-Miner](#): There are a few things nearly every Alaskan has stories about: cold temperatures, wildlife encounters and issues with shipping. Whether it's an online merchant claiming Alaska isn't part of the U.S., a package making a round-the-world transit as it's tracked, or a shipping fee several times the value of the item being purchased, frustrations abound. It's difficult or impossible to find good explanations for why our state seems to be treated like a foreign country by Outside retailers and shipping firms, and residents often have few ways to get around being gouged.





[Postal Technology International](#): (latest issue now online)


- [Quantum Solutions acquires last mile delivery firm CouriersPlease](#)
- [Descartes Systems acquires Airclic](#)
- [DHL to launch innovation center in Singapore](#)
- [USPS offers secure destruction service for mailers](#)
- [Correos to install KEBA's automated lockers in Spain](#)
- [Royal Mail launches 3D printing trial](#)


December 10, 2014


 [The Atlantic](#): It's cramming time for Congress as lawmakers will spend the next two days scouring—and then likely voting on—a \$1.013 trillion, 1,600-page spending bill released on Tuesday night after months of bipartisan negotiations. The House and Senate must act to fund the government by midnight on Thursday to avoid a shutdown. In classic congressional fashion, appropriators posted their enormous bill, which is replete with key policy provisions negotiated behind closed doors, just over 48 hours before the deadline, leaving little time for debate or amendments. Rather than a stopgap measure that extends funding for only a few months, the omnibus appropriations bill budgets spending for nearly the entire federal government through the end of the fiscal year next September. If the House and Senate cannot pass the budget by Thursday, they would have to approve a short-term measure to buy themselves more time and keep the government open into next week.


 [Office of the Inspector General: Postal Service Board of Governors' Travel and Miscellaneous Expenses for Fiscal Year 2014](#) In our recent audit, "Postal Service Board of Governors' Travel and Miscellaneous Expenses for Fiscal Year 2014", we found expenses and fees were properly supported, reasonable, and in compliance with Postal Service and Board policies.


 [City A.M.](#): Independent postal company DX Group yesterday said it had acquired a 49.8 per cent stake in Gnewt Cargo, an environmentally friendly delivery services company. The Buckinghamshire-headquartered DX will pay approximately £1.75m in cash upon completion of the deal.


 [LBR](#): Postal and logistics firm Deutsche Post DHL has StreetScooter, which is a German start-up offering electric mobility solutions. As a result of the agreement, which is still subject to antitrust approval, the company will also acquire the development and production rights to vehicles as well as the employees of StreetScooter GmbH. StreetScooter GmbH is a spin-off of RWTH Aachen and a consortium of approximately 80 industrial companies in the automotive industry and related sectors.


 [Air Cargo World](#): In a deal that could have long-term consequences for the future of express delivery in the UK, recently privatized postal carrier Royal Mail entered into a partnership with its largest competitor, Amazon, to join its new "click-and-collect" parcel service, called Local Collect. Under the agreement, Amazon will gain access to the 10,500 post offices Royal Mail operates across the country, providing convenient, secure distribution points at which customers can pick up packages ordered online. The Local Collect service will be similar to UK-based CollectPlus, which delivers parcels to a network of convenience stores, newsstands, supermarkets, and gas stations. The Royal Mail agreement will make it easier for Amazon to grow faster in the UK without incurring the added costs of last-mile delivery to customers' doorsteps. And for Royal Mail, the benefits are... well, unclear at the moment.

 [PRWeb](#): lettrs™, the rapidly growing global messaging app, today announced a new branding and money-raising vehicle with the launch of the first SocialStamps on a mobile communications platform. This development follows Google Play's selection of the lettrs Android app as one of the Best Apps of 2014. The new socially shareable stamps are available on that app and the lettrs iPhone app. The release of lettrs SocialStamps™, available today for smartphones and tablets, enables advertisers, personalities and nonprofit organizations to begin using the stamps to increase brand awareness and raise money for causes. Unlike a postal stamp, the digital stamps are smart in that they capture data and can be shared across all major social networks and across the lettrs user base of 174 countries. The data-driven stamps will also work as a new distribution model for advertisers, allowing promotions to be embedded in the stamp and activated on messages within the lettrs network, which generated more than 750 million impressions this year. The app company RideScout is the first to advertise an app on a SocialStamp.

 [Irish Times](#): Service producer prices rose by 2.9 per cent in the third quarter compared to the same three-month period a year earlier, according to new figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO). The experimental Services Produce Price Index (SPPI), which measure changes in average prices charged by domestic service producers to other businesses, shows prices increased by 0.1 per cent from July to September as against a rise of 0.3 per cent in the preceding quarter. According to the index, the most notable quarterly price changes were in postal and courier costs, which rose by 5 per cent. Freight and removal by road costs were up 0.7 per cent, while air transport costs declined by 1 per cent.


 [Lexology](#): The Competition Authority (now the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission) conducted an investigation into the application of An Post's Zonal Pricing Scheme for users of its Publication Services product between March 2012 and February 2013. (1) The Authority conducted its investigation under section 5 of the Competition Act 2002 and under Article 102 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The investigation conducted by the Authority indicates that An Post sought exclusivity from publishers by making a reduced tariff for the Publication Services product conditional on An Post providing all of a publisher's delivery requirements. This had essentially the same effect as granting an exclusivity discount.


 [PRNewswire](#): International Brotherhood of Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa today wrote a letter that was sent to the Congressional leadership and circulated to all members of Congress, expressing strong opposition to proposed legislation that would result in a \$2 billion bailout of United Parcel Service (UPS).


 [ABC13 Houston](#): A local merchant says he is not having a good holiday season. The reason? Packages he's sending are not getting delivered on time. People who make their living selling goods on eBay depend on prompt deliveries to stay in business. One man in Bryan says the U.S. Post Service is not holding up its end of the bargain.

Mitchell Robinson sells items on eBay and right now he claims when it comes to getting his goods to buyers, the post office is just not delivering. "USPS has caused me a lot of issues with a lot of remarks from buyers, things are delayed," he said. Robinson says when he started checking he found plenty of items not where they were supposed to be.

 ***From the Federal Register: Postal Service NOTICES*** Privacy Act; Systems of Records , 73345–73346 [2014–28882] [[TEXT](#)]


 ***InsiderMedia***: The Marlow-headquartered group, formerly known as TNT Post UK until it rebranded in September 2014, said it carried more than 3.9 billion items during its latest financial year. According to the postal giant's financial accounts, which have recently been made public on Companies House, revenues for the year to 31 December 2013 were approximately £575m, a 3.6 per cent increase from a restated turnover of £554.6m the year before. But despite the growth in turnover, Whistl UK slipped from a pre-tax profit of £5.7m to pre-tax losses of £8.1m after operating profits were hit with £14.5m of exceptional costs.

 ***Postalnews.com***: Just weeks after retiring as the postal service's top computer security official, Chuck McGann is joining federal IT contractor CRGT as "Chief Cyber Strategist". Presumably that means McGann will be trying to sell more of his new employer's services to his old federal colleagues. McGann's retirement from the USPS last month came a week after the USPS revealed that it had allowed sensitive employee data to be accessed by hackers. Prior to that, the USPS admitted in August that it had lost its entire database of security incidents when the hard drive containing the data failed. (There was a backup, but it was stored on the same hard drive).

 ***BusinessDay***: The rising number of orders being processed by online retailers in Nigeria, along with the attendant need for efficiency in delivery, is opening up fresh business opportunities for Nigeria's postal and courier industry, market observers say. With the population of internet users growing rapidly, reaching 48 million, according to the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), online transactions in Nigeria are expected to reach N1 trillion by the end of 2014. Local and foreign courier operators are already positioning themselves to tap into the huge market potential.

 ***Nanci Langley and Tony Hammond have been confirmed by the Senate as Postal Regulatory Commissioners.***

December 9, 2014

 ***Washington Post***: ShipMatrix, a logistics software firm, analyzed the on-time delivery rates of FedEx and UPS during Thanksgiving week, and each carrier saw significant improvement. The chart below shows how FedEx and UPS compare on their "raw on-time delivery service." This is a measure in which ShipMatrix does not factor in weather-related delays or snags such as an incorrect address or a recipient being unavailable to accept their package. In other words, it's a measure of how well the carriers are delivering packages purely on their own merits.



Dead Tree Edition: Barely two months after deciding to skip the usual January price increases, the U.S. Postal Service appears close to announcing that prices will rise in the spring. As usual, the do-nothing Congress is to blame. The Association for Postal Commerce (aka PostCom), a multi-industry trade group for business mailers, reports that USPS "is readying itself for the next postal price change to be effective April 26, 2015." PostCom's "heard it through the grapevine" reports on Postal Service doings are usually right on the mark.

 ***From the Federal Register:***

Postal Regulatory Commission
NOTICES

New Postal Products ,		
73115 [2014–28744]		[TEXT] [PDF]
Postal Service		
NOTICES		
Product Changes:		
	Priority Mail Express Negotiated Service Agreement ,	
	73116 [2014–28740]	[TEXT] [PDF]
	Priority Mail Negotiated Service Agreement ,	
	73115–73116 [2014–28737]	[TEXT] [PDF]



PostalVision 2020: Postal executives have never had much of an appetite for privatization. While it is true that some of the innovative programs developed in the past, such as work sharing discounts to mailers (the "Quite Liberalization" as one study described it), contracting out on a large scale, or "coopetition" with UPS and FedEx in the package market may have had a similar effect (transfer of postal activities to the private sector). The Postal Service has also attempted to find new ways to offer retail services to customers in areas where traditional post offices were unsustainable. The experience of other nations suggests that privatization requires strong support from senior postal management and carefully designed processes to move towards privatization, with the support of major stakeholders. Neither exist in any real degree in the U.S. Postal privatization remains mostly a poorly developed concept based on the theory that somehow private sector incentives will drive more effective behavior. Given that the U.S. Postmaster General is paid chump change compared to many counterparts at foreign posts or to private sector organizations of comparable size, the U.S. has received excellent value from recent postal leadership. Remember also that postage in the U.S. remains among the lowest in the developed world.



American Postal Workers Union: The APWU reached a \$56 million settlement with the USPS on Dec. 5 to resolve a long-standing dispute over postmasters and supervisors in small offices performing bargaining unit work. The agreement includes provisions that are intended to prevent future violations of the limits on the number of hours managerial personnel may spend performing craft duties. Most notably, it includes a mechanism for reporting and monitoring the amount of hours involved. The agreement also makes it easier to enforce the contract. Clerks no longer have to fear reprisals for filing a grievance, as the contract can now be enforced without a union officer having to set foot in an office.

DMM Advisory: December DMM Update. Postal Explorer® (pe.usps.com) is your source for up-to-date mailing standards. The Domestic Mail Manual (DMM®) is fully searchable on Postal Explorer and features fly-out menus, cross-reference links, and an extensive subject index. Today we updated our mailing standards to include the following changes:


- **Hold For Pickup Service Expanded to Additional Products** We revised [508.7.0](#) to expand Hold For Pickup service to include Parcel Select Lightweight® and Bound Printed Matter parcels. We published this information in the October 16, 2014, Postal Bulletin.
- **New Options for Restricted Delivery and Pickup On Demand Services** We revised various sections to introduce Restricted Delivery with Signature Confirmation™ and Package Pickup and Pickup on Demand. We published this information in the October 30, 2014, Postal Bulletin.
- **New Priority Mail Window Flat Rate Envelope** We revised [223.1.8.1](#) to add a Priority Mail® Window Flat Rate Envelope to the suite of Flat Rate Envelopes. We published this information in the October 30, 2014, Postal Bulletin.
- **Clarifications to Extra Services Standards** We revised [503](#) to include clarifications and additional references points to make it easier to find related extra services standards. We published this information in the November 27, 2014, Postal Bulletin. Our next scheduled DMM update is January 26, 2015.

December 8, 2014




Office of the Inspector General: [*The First and Last Mile Strategy: A Critical Assessment*](#). A white paper.


As the Postal Service continues to address its difficult financial situation, some have argued that overall efficiency would improve if the Postal Service were to focus exclusively on the first and last mile (collection and delivery). While the introduction of workshare discounts has led to private industry taking over a portion of the middle mile – mail processing and transportation – allowing private industry to take over the entire middle mile warrants close examination. We therefore asked Dr. John Panzar, an expert in postal economics, to look at the economic implications of the Postal Service abandoning the middle mile completely and focusing exclusively on the first and last mile for the letter and flat market. Dr. Panzar finds that the Postal Service's mail processing plays a vital role in ensuring the efficiency of the postal sector, even in the absence of economies of scale in mail processing. In other words, Dr. Panzar maintains that if the Postal Service abandons all mail processing and transportation of letters and flats, overall efficiency will decrease. Worse, the Postal Service would experience a loss in profits, and mailers would have to pay higher prices. In fact, the only parties benefiting would be the private providers of mail processing, but their benefit would be less than the combined loss to the Postal Service and mailers.


 [The Guardian](#): Within a decade the traditional Christmas card could all but disappear. The cost of a first class stamp – now 62p – is deterring many, and the decline in sales that first began at the onset of the credit crisis is beginning to accelerate. "The older generation, which traditionally would contact old friends each year, is being put off by the new postage costs. The younger generation, which does everything online, isn't interested in physically sending a card. A spokesman for Royal Mail said that, on average, people sent 17 cards last year – the same as in 2012 – and that its research indicated that two-thirds of people who sent cards last year will be sending the same number this year.




PostCom Members!! Your latest copy of PostCom's [Postal Executive Summary](#) is now available online.

 [The Hill](#): It's crunch time as Congress has only a few days to avoid a government shutdown. Leaders in both parties hope to adjourn for the year by Thursday, which is the same day the current government funding bill expires. The House plans send its members home once the appropriations package is headed to Obama's desk. But the Senate's adjournment could be later since it still hasn't passed a package to renew expired tax breaks, the defense authorization, various nominations and other unfinished business.


 [Politico](#): The House and Senate need to pass a government-funding bill and renew a terrorism insurance program this week, the final gasp of legislating before Republicans take full control of Capitol Hill in the next Congress. Both bills are expected to pass before the government shutdown deadline of Thursday, but not without several hectic days of whipping, arm-twisting and legislative bargaining between Republican and Democratic congressional leaders and the White House.

 [Invezz](#): Royal Mail has teamed up with iMakr to offer 3D printing, the former state-owned postal business revealed in a statement today. The new technology services will be part of a trial, which will run from today at the New Cavendish Street delivery office, near Oxford Street. Under the scheme, customers will be able to purchase a range of ready-to-print items or bring in their own designs to print in the delivery office or at the iMakr store. The FTSE 100-listed firm hopes to capitalise on growing demand from smaller companies unable to afford the capital investment required for a 3D printer, as well as interest from consumers looking for a unique product.

 [Computerworld](#): "Digital SOS: How technology can save the USPS"

 [AllGov](#): "Postmaster General: Who Is Megan Brennan?"


December 7, 2014


 [The EMissourian](#): Because the USPS is losing billions of dollars every year, it continues to try to cut costs. Service is affected. For a long time we have wondered about the future of the USPS. It does have tough competition from private companies that give good service. The USPS, to survive, needs financial help from the federal government. People do wonder if other federal agencies are subsidized, why isn't the postal service? Why is it expected to survive on its own? Make a profit? The federal government wastes so much money. The money that is spent on foreign aid, for instance, is huge and much of it never reaches the people it is supposed to help. If those aid gifts could be trimmed, and that money used to support USPS, the agency wouldn't be at the brink of failure. This should be a discussion point in Congress, which has looked upon the USPS as a "loser" and there has been a "don't touch" attitude by lawmakers.





[Dead Tree Edition](#): Don't fret for retiring Postmaster General Pat Donahoe. He will leave USPS on Feb. 1 with a pension having an estimated present value of more than \$4 million, according to a financial report the agency filed Friday. Brennan's FY2014 base salary of \$236,536 was \$42,000 less than Donahoe's. But with a \$20,000 bonus and a \$77,000 gain in the value of her FERS retirement plan, her total compensation of \$351,655 came out \$3,000 ahead of Donahoe's. Before some grandstanding politicians tries to score points by blathering about overpaid postal executives, consider this: The CEOs of USPS's slightly smaller competitors, FedEx and UPS, earned more than \$14 million and \$10 million, respectively -- versus \$1.8 million for the top five USPS executives combined.

December 6, 2014

 [Wall Street Journal](#): Instacart is raising a fresh round of funds for its same-day grocery delivery service, valuing the San Francisco startup at nearly \$2 billion, according to people familiar with the matter. In its effort to raise about \$200 million, the company is in discussions with venture-capital firm Kleiner Perkins, the people said. The discussions include existing investors such as Sequoia Capital, Khosla Ventures and Andreessen Horowitz, one of these people said. he company makes same-day delivery of groceries from stores including Whole Foods and Costco, among other stores. Instacart sends couriers to the stores, purchases the goods and brings them to customers either at set times or within about an hour or two, charging between \$3.99 and \$5.99 for orders of at least \$35.

 [Proactive Investors](#): Royal Mail celebrated its IPO anniversary last month and after the early turbulence, the company appears to be stabilising after undergoing a move from public to private hands. The shares which listed at 330p last October, rocketed to 618p in January due to excess demand and over optimism, before settling back around 400p. Royal Mail has two main businesses; UK Parcel, International and Letters, which generates 82% of revenue and General Logistics Systems (GLS), responsible for 18% of revenue. UKPIL, is offsetting a structural decline in the letter industry with Parcelforce, its fast-growing branded parcel delivery company and marketing mail operations. Parcelforce has a market leading position, with 53% of deliveries, fuelled by an increase in internet shopping, while revenue from marketing mail benefitted from an improving domestic economy. GLS operates a parcel delivery operation across Europe, where tough competition caused profit margins to slip. Privatisation of the 500-year old postal service has not been easy, with cost cutting and improving profit margins, proving harder than was expected at the time of the floatation. Its monopoly power and valuable assets, however, have shifted the group into a lower-growth utility type company, which has taken investors time to get their heads around.

 [St. Albert Gazette](#): With the installation of new Canada Post community mailboxes and elimination of door-to-delivery come spring 2015, residents question ease of access to their mail. Greg Stewart has a "Save Canada Post" sign posted in the window of his home in Akinsdale, in support of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers who are fighting the postal service changes. His concern lies with seniors and people with disabilities or mobility issues.

 [Winnipeg Free Press](#): A community mailbox was pried open by vandals this week, leaving residents not only inconvenienced but concerned about protecting personal information. The multi-unit mailboxes are currently being installed throughout Manitoba, replacing postal home delivery. They were initially promoted as being secure from theft. Officers found Wednesday one group of Brandon boxes had been broken into, while the culprits were unsuccessful in their attempt to force open a second block of boxes.

 [From the Federal Register](#): **Postal Regulatory Commission NOTICES New Postal Product** , 72715


[2014–28675] [\[TEXT\]](#)





Office of the Inspector General: [City Carrier Management and Compensation](#)


What the OIG Found The Postal Service implemented a number of tools to track and manage city carrier operations; however it remains challenging to supervise city carriers. Also, the Postal Service continues to experience excessive supervisory, overtime and grievance costs related to city carriers. Specifically, supervisors have more activities to manage for city carriers compared to rural carriers, such as managing daily workhours and work load activity. In addition, for each 100 bargaining employees, supervisory costs for city carriers, including salary and benefits, were about \$440,000 in FY 2013, compared to rural carrier supervisory costs of \$220,000. In addition, the Postal Service paid about \$1.2 million for city carrier overtime, per 100 bargaining employees; however, overtime for rural carriers was only \$236,000 per 100 bargaining employees. Furthermore, management handled about grievances with payouts totaling for city carriers for every 100 bargaining employees, compared to grievances totaling each for every 100 rural carriers. These costs are evidence that it is more costly and difficult to supervise city carriers in every neighborhood. Furthermore, compensation costs per delivery are significantly higher for city carriers than for rural carriers – in FY 2013, city carriers' compensation costs averaged 58 cents per delivery point, while rural carriers' averaged 49 cents. There are about 133 million delivery points nationwide. In addition to the higher overall administrative and compensation costs associated with city carriers, there is little incentive for carriers to be more productive and finish routes faster because they are paid hourly. Because of changes in the Postal Service's business environment, including an increase in the number of package deliveries and the adjustment of delivery routes, the Postal Service has an increasing need for carrier efficiency. Developing a compensation system for city carriers based on time standards for specific tasks rather than hours worked would allow management to reduce supervisory costs, grievance payouts, and administrative costs, while increasing overall efficiency. Paying city carriers hourly results into longer workhours; whereas, a different compensation system could incentivize higher productivity. Therefore, such changes could reduce compensation costs by at least \$1.3 billion in FY 2015.

What the OIG Recommended We recommended the chief human resources officer and executive vice president develop a city carrier compensation system based on time standards for specific tasks completed by a carrier.

 [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#): A village on a remote Alaska island in the Bering Sea has been without a regular mail delivery service since the community's only postal worker quit last month because of pregnancy.

 [Washington Post](#): "Jet-setting postal regulator replaced amid scrutiny of travel habits" President Obama this week replaced the globetrotting chairman of the Postal Regulatory Commission this week after years of criticism over frequent trips she charged to U.S. taxpayers. The PRC confirmed on Friday that Obama tapped commissioner Robert Taub to take the place of Ruth Goldway as head of the panel, serving on an interim basis until the Senate confirms a permanent replacement. PRC spokeswoman Gail Adams on Friday said Goldway plans to remain with the commission until her replacement has been confirmed.


 [The Leadership Conference](#): On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of more than 200 national organizations committed to the protection and advancement of civil and human rights, we write to express our opposition to the reappointment of Mickey D. Barnett to serve as a Governor on the Board of Governors of the United States Postal Service (USPS). We are especially troubled that Mr. Barnett has previously worked as a lobbyist for the payday lending industry. Given the harmful effects of payday lending on the communities we represent, and the close relationship between the USPS and those communities, we urge the Senate to delay further consideration of Mr. Barnett's nomination until the 114th Congress to see if our concerns can be addressed.


 [USNews](#): Approximately 65 percent of online retailers are offering free or upgraded expedited shipping this holiday season, with 20 percent of those businesses offering that service as late as Dec. 23, according to the National Retail Federation's e-commerce division Shop.org.


December 5, 2014




PostCom Members!! Posted on this site is the [Service Performance Update on the Postal Service for Q4 FY2014](#)


 [Washington Examiner](#): Since its creation through the Inspector General Act of 1978, the federal inspector general system has repeatedly proven its value to the American taxpayer by rooting out waste, fraud and abuse. Simply put, the inspector general role is invaluable to good government. Candidly, the IG system isn't perfect, and it's not always consistent. The act creates a process for the president to nominate some IG candidates who are then confirmed by the Senate, helping to ensure the IGs have the independence to perform their jobs effectively. Yet despite the important role played by the IGs, it often takes years to fill a vacant IG position. We may never know how much these delays cost American taxpayers, but we know the price is high. In some cases, the IG's budget is controlled by the agency, and maintaining an independent, objective audit function can be challenging when your budget is controlled by the people you audit.

 [Washington Post](#): For generations, the U.S. Postal Service had a reputation for employing African Americans when many others would not. Even slaves delivered mail. But now, a major civil rights coalition is concerned that current policies could dull the luster on that legacy. The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights says Postal Service consolidation plans could harm the black community that has depended on it. Although there have been no layoffs, the USPS has reduced its workforce as its workload has dropped. That has a particular impact on the black community, because the Postal Service's workforce is disproportionately black and better paid than other African Americans. About 21 percent of postal employees are black, almost double the representation in the national workforce.

 [Muscatine Journal](#): Trying to make up for the steep decline in mail volume — and with it a decline in first class mail revenue — the Postal Service is steering away from its original mail delivery mandate and into questionable new concepts. The agency should instead be looking for ways to climb out of this hole they have dug themselves, not dig deeper. This relationship also works directly against the fairness of market competition. The USPS is a government agency that is allotted certain benefits because they are a monopoly. These benefits allow them to save on costs that private businesses, both large and small, have to pay — thus allowing the USPS to undercut the market and "crowd out" other businesses.

 [Business Review](#): The Romanian Post does not have plans to lay off people and it will post a profit of EUR 14.5 million for 2014, said the general manager of the Romanian Post Alexandru Petrescu, according to economica.net. In case the company undergoes privatization, no staff reduction is in plans, since the current management does not agree with laying off personnel as a solution for the immediate recovery of the company.

December 4, 2014

 [The Washington Free Beacon](#): The U.S. Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) has named a new acting chairman, after the Washington Free Beacon revealed that its current leader was racking up tens of thousands of dollars in foreign travel expenses. A PRC official announced in an internal email obtained by the Free Beacon that commissioner Robert Taub would be replacing current chairman Ruth Goldway on Thursday. Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee chairman Tom Carper (D., Del.) and ranking member Tom Coburn (R., Okla.) called on President Barack Obama in July to name a new PRC chair to replace Goldway before her term expires. "Naming your choice for Ms. Goldway's seat and for the future chairmanship of the Commission well in advance of the expiration of her term will remove uncertainty," □ the senators wrote in a letter. "It will also allow this Committee to continue its work on postal reform with a better sense of who will be implementing it in the coming years."



White House: *President Barack Obama today formally designated Commissioner Robert G. Taub as Acting Chairman of the Postal Regulatory Commission (Commission), effective immediately.*

He succeeds Ruth Y. Goldway who has served as Chairman since August 2009. Chairman Taub was sworn in as Commissioner in October 2011, following his nomination by President Barack Obama and confirmation by the United States Senate. The Commission elected him Vice Chairman for calendar year 2013.



PostCom Members !! The latest issue of the [PostCom Bulletin](#) is available online. *Hey! You've not been getting the weekly PostCom Bulletin--the best postal newsletter anywhere...bar none? [Send us by email](#) your name, company, company title, postal and email address. Get a chance to see what you've been missing.*

Post & Parcel: France's postal operator La Poste is launching a new product next month that would allow people to access their homes with smartphones, instead of physical keys. Called Postaccess, the lock technology will allow individuals or businesses to manage the entry and exit of their homes remotely, granting other people access to their homes on a permanent or temporary basis. For private households, it could mean housekeepers, baby sitters, neighbours or contractors can be given electronic keys via a mobile phone application for access to a house at certain times. Children who might not have smartphones can be given special bracelets including RFID chips that would grant them permanent access to the home. For businesses it would mean no longer having to give out keys to customers or staff, such as for property rentals, real estate agencies.

Linns Stamp News: When Megan Brennan becomes the nation's 74th postmaster general Feb. 1, she is likely to discover that one of her big challenges is making friends on Capitol Hill. Some of the best friends of the United States Postal Service have been questioning some of her predecessors' actions of late. That is likely to make Brennan's efforts to secure financial help for the USPS from lawmakers more difficult. In the Senate, Sen. Tom Carper, D-Del., has said he wants assurances that Brennan's selection followed a detailed search. In the House, another USPS supporter has been questioning the Postal Service's slow reaction to a computer hacking incident that has been linked to China.



Postal Technology International:


- [Transnatur to partner with Itella Logistics in Portugal](#)
- [CitySprint acquires CYC Logistics Blackbay and NetDespatch partner to provide 'Pass My Parcel' Amazon service](#)
- [Ofcom rejects Royal Mail complaint against competition](#)


Mailers' Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC)


Presentations and notes from the November MTAC meeting are available on the [MTAC webpage on RIBBS](#). The documents are located in the MTAC Open Session and MTAC Membership Assembly/Focus Group Discussions section under [MTAC Notes and Presentations](#), 2014 MTAC Open Presentations are listed on the MTAC page under Industry Outreach. You can click on the links below: MTAC Open Session ([agendas](#) and [presentations](#))


Post & Parcel: Following the example set by Germany, Austria, Denmark, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Switzerland, the Czech Republic and France, the Spanish postal operator Correos has decided to expand its customer services with KEBA parcel automats. These will operate under the brand name "CityPac" and a total of sixty systems are to be installed in 2015.


The Hill: The Senate confirmed six ambassadors, eight judges and three executive branch nominations on Thursday. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) said Secretary of State John Kerry has called on the Senate to clear all pending nominations for his agency. Reid said there were nearly 60 nominees waiting on the executive calendar. [EdNote: But nothing yet regarding pending confirmations to the postal board or the regulatory commission.]


 [The Hill](#): Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) said the U.S. Postal Service should stop closing facilities to cut costs. "They think they can cut their way to fiscal solvency and quite frankly they're wrong," Tester said on the Senate floor Thursday. "What the Postal Services does need is responsible postal reform legislation." Tester said the closing of mail processing facilities and offices disproportionately harms "rural America." Some closures are expected at the start of next year. The agency has also proposed ending over-night delivery. Tester said those decisions will make the Postal Service less competitive against private companies. "There are a lot of people in Congress who would like to see the Postal Service go out of business," Tester said. "[But] it is a critical part of our daily lives." He said there is no reason for the Postal Service to "keep digging the hole," when Congress could pass reforms that would end the counting of pensions as a cost the agency needs to recoup each year. Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) joined Tester on the Senate floor. All three of their states expect to have facilities closed.


 [New York Post](#): Why use a drug mule when the mailman will do? Pot dealers are shipping their product to New York via USPS Priority Mail so frequently that some corrupt postal workers are catching on and cashing in, authorities say. The feds nailed eight USPS staffers at a Long Island Priority Mail sorting plant this week for allegedly intercepting more than 260 packages that they suspected had marijuana in them, according to a criminal complaint.

 [GetWestLondon](#): Scouts in the north of Hillingdon are back running their annual Christmas postal service to raise funds for scout activities in 2015. By overwhelming local demand the Ruislip, Eastcote and Northwood Explorer Scouts - who been celebrating their centenary year throughout 2014 - will be hand delivering Christmas cards for the sixth year running. The popular service is available because of the British Telecommunications Bill, so long as only Christmas cards are delivered. For a cost of just 20p the Explorer Scouts will deliver your cards across Northwood, Ruislip and Eastcote between December 18 and Christmas Eve.


 [Logistics Business Review](#): Quantum Solutions, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Singapore Post (SingPost) has unveiled a plan to acquire Australia-based parcel delivery company Couriers Please Holdings (CP Holdings) from New Zealand Post Group, for A\$ 95m (\$80m). SingPost intends to expand its ecommerce logistics capabilities in Australia with the acquisition.

 [Linex](#): According to Hursh Blackwell LLP, capital spending is making a comeback at the Postal Service from dangerously low levels. The Postal Service plans on tripling its capital spending commitments in Fiscal Year 2015. Under its recently issued Integrated Financial Plan for FY 2015, the Postal Service projects \$2.2 billion in new capital commitments. This contrasts sharply with capital spending over the last five years, which was annually below \$1 billion. Capital spending commitments will be concentrated on previously deferred investment needed for aged and end-of-life equipment. Planned spending includes \$800 million for mail processing equipment; \$500 million for vehicles; \$500 million for customer service and support equipment; and \$400 million for facilities.

 [Post & Parcel](#): Worldwide parcel volumes grew 3.7% year-on-year in in 2013 according to the latest figures from the Universal Postal Union. But, perhaps surprisingly with e-commerce driving much of the growth, there was a slight decrease in volumes in the Asia-Pacific region, a big growth area for online shopping. The UPU, whose figures focus on national postal operators rather than including figures from private sector parcel carriers, said infrastructure difficulties or "intense" competition in the parcel industry could account for the regional decline in volumes, which was also seen in Africa. In the rest of the world parcel volumes have been growing thanks to the soaring popularity of online shopping. Worldwide parcel traffic reached 6.7bn items in 2013, with 6.6bn of that from domestic parcels.

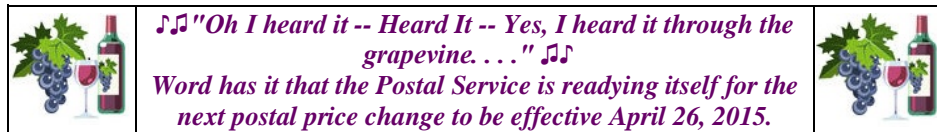
 [Washington Post](#): The U.S. Postal Service has the potential to earn billions of dollars a year by entering the payday-loan business, but a former banking lobbyist, Mickey Barnett, could block its path. Barnett, now chairs the USPS Board of Governors. Previously, he represented the interests of payday lenders, who stand to lose out if the Postal Service grabs a share of their market. The question now is whether Barnett would support the Postal Service entering the loan business, a move that would give the agency an influx of cash after eight straight years of multibillion-dollar losses. On the flipside, he might oppose such a change because of his old ties to the banking industry. Payday loans, which are cash advances that have to be repaid by the next payday . . . are controversial because of their high interest rates and the fact that they often trap low-income individuals in a cycle of debt. A


report from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau this years said more than 80 percent of payday loans are rolled over or followed by another loan within two weeks.

 **NBC Washington:** Congressman Blake Farenthold (R, Texas) says he wants answers about what he saw in a News4 I-Team investigation into reported sexual assaults inside the US Postal Service. "Absolutely unacceptable. It's not right," Rep. Farenthold told the I-Team in his Capitol Hill office. He said he was appalled at the revelation one out of every five sex assaults inside USPS was committed by postal employees against other postal employees. He said it was the first time he heard of the problem and the retaliation employees the I-Team interviewed said they encountered when they made complaints about their supervisors. The I-Team spent more than six months trying to get an interview with US Postmaster Patrick Donahoe until approaching him at a recent stamp event. That's when Donahoe said, "Our employees are safe. We provide a safe environment. We provide an environment where if there is a problem, we respond to it." But Rep. Farenthold said, "What concerns me most was how difficult it was for you to get the information."

 **Popular Mechanics:** "Why Did the USPS Make a Useless Augmented Reality App?"


December 3, 2014



 **Roll Call:** A coalition of largely liberal organizations has written a letter asking the Senate to extend the lame duck to allow as many of President Barack Obama's nominees to win confirmation before Republicans take control of the chamber.

 **From the Federal Register:**

Postal Regulatory Commission	
NOTICES	
New Postal Products ,	
71806–71807 [2014–28399]	
71808 [2014–28400]	
71808–71809 [2014–28401]	
71807–71808 [2014–28402]	
71809 [2014–28403]	
Postal Products; Amendments ,	
71809–71810 [2014–28404]	

 **BusinessWire:** Staples makes less stress, more savings happen this holiday season with 20 percent off shipping services through Dec. 23 with coupon, and an expanded selection of packaging and shipping supplies. New for this holiday season, Staples is offering a choice of shipping options, including United Parcel Service (UPS) and the U.S. Postal Service's Approved Shipper Program in select stores.

INDUSTRYALERT *U.S. Postal Service Continues to Streamline its Package Service Product Offerings.*

- On November 14, 2014, the USPS filed a request with the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) to **transfer First-Class Mail Parcels to the competitive product list** (Docket # MC2015-7). The request seeks to: 1) remove First-Class Mail parcels from the market-dominant product list; and 2) to have an identical service be added to the competitive product list as a retail subcategory of the existing First-Class Package Service product. This request will simply recognize the competitive nature of the marketplace that First-Class Mail Parcels serves, and grant the Postal Service the pricing flexibility enjoyed by competitors that offer comparable products. See the entire filing on [the PRC site](#).
- On November 17, 2014, the USPS filed a request with the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) to **remove Return Receipt for Merchandise Service (RRM) from the market-dominant product list** (Docket # MC2015-8). RRM service was first introduced in 1988 to provide retail and commercial mailers with the ability to obtain a return receipt postcard for packages containing merchandise. Volume and revenue for this service has declined precipitously over the past few years. Customers currently using RRM can receive the same (or improved) product features by using other existing services. See the entire filing on [the PRC site](#)

December 2, 2014




[The National Association of Postal Supervisors](#): The National Association of Postal Supervisors has requested the Postal Regulatory Commission to assess the impact of the Postal Service's planned consolidation of 82 mail processing facilities, slated to begin in January 2015. The consolidations are expected to slow down delivery of much of the nation's mail, especially in rural and small town America, and virtually eliminate overnight single-piece First Class mail service.


[Save the Post Office](#): The Postal Service has implemented POSTPlan at about 11,400 post offices so far. That leaves approximately 1,630 offices where the window hours have yet to be reduced and the original postmaster is probably still on the job. Many if not most of the postmasters working at these remaining offices will be subject to a Reduction in Force (RIF) on January 9th. We've heard that about half of them are eligible for retirement. Many have been hoping that something would happen to prevent the RIF — like the Postal Service initiating a phased retirement program — but at this point it looks inevitable.

[Post & Parcel](#): The US Postal Service has launched a new secure destruction service for undeliverable-as-addressed mail. The USPS BlueEarth Secure Destruction service allows all mailers using First Class Mail to have undeliverable items automatically intercepted and destroyed securely at a postal facility, without additional charge, instead of being returned to the sender. The service is made possible thanks to the Postal Service's tracking technology, the Intelligent Mail Barcode system. Items like undelivered bank statements will be shredded so they are unreadable prior to disposal and recycling. USPS said the solution would help reduce the costs to mailers and the Postal Service itself from dealing with more than 1.4bn pieces of undeliverable-as-addressed mail each year. The Postal Service said that as well as economic benefits, the service was also an environmentally-conscious solution, in avoiding the shipment of items back to the sender, and in recycling the mail pieces.

[From the Federal Register](#):


Postal Service	
NOTICES	
Product Changes:	
Priority Mail Express Negotiated Service Agreement ,	
71459 [2014-28297]	[TEXT] [PDF]
Priority Mail Negotiated Service Agreement ,	
71459 [2014-28296]	[TEXT] [PDF]
71459 [2014-28298]	[TEXT] [PDF]


 [Daily Mail](#): Royal Mail's stark warning that its same-price postal service is under threat were rubbish by regulators today. Ofcom said the postal firm's legal obligation to deliver letters anywhere in the country for the same price was not being undermined from rival online companies. It revealed it would not impose new conditions on Royal Mail's competitors like Amazon and TNT, in a blow to the postal service.

 [Wall Street Journal](#): The Internet appears to be the main winner at the start of the holiday shopping blitz, and the loser could be the retail industry's profits. While conventional wisdom holds that online sales should be more profitable, because websites don't need the pricey real estate and labor necessary to maintain a store network, many retailers actually earn less or even lose money online after factoring in the cost of shipping, handling and higher rates of returns. For retailers that outsource their Web and fulfillment operations, costs can run as high as 25% of sales, industry analysts said.




[Postal Vision 2020](#): The mailing and shipping industry in the U.S. still is operating in a kind of time-warp where little is really changing. Congress refuses to act to provide the Postal Service with a viable business model, and the legislative proposals on the table are nowhere near comprehensive enough. The Postal Service continues to focus on efficiency and cost control, but such strategies will not be enough. Posts in most of the rest of the developed world are moving on.

 [Sky News](#): Royal Mail will be dealt a fresh blow on Tuesday when the media regulator says it sees no reason to overhaul rules for rivals competing with it in the end-to-end postal delivery market. Sky News understands that Ofcom has concluded following an assessment that Royal Mail's ability to meet its universal service obligation (USO) is not being impeded by competition in the end-to-end delivery market. The regulator will set out its views after months of complaints from Moya Greene, Royal Mail's chief executive, that competitors such as Whistl - formerly known as TNT Post - are able to "cherry-pick" the most lucrative parts of the privatised company's former monopoly, leaving it to cover more expensive rural areas.


 [NBC4 Washington](#): At least two U.S. Postal Service employees are under investigation for stealing gift cards from mail processed at an agency distribution center in Capitol Heights, Maryland. An official with the U.S. Postal Service Inspector General confirmed the investigation to the News4 I-Team Monday afternoon. The two employees, a woman and a man, are suspected of stealing at least \$9,500 in gift cards. Federal investigators said one of the employees has already admitted her role in the thefts and said she'd also served as a "lookout" for her colleague, when he opened mail to snatch gift cards. The investigators said they found 25 gift cards in the woman's car when they searched the vehicle.




[Senators' Letter to PMG Donahoe](#): A group of senators, including Tim Johnson of South Dakota, Ed Markey and Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, Sherrod Brown of Ohio, Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow of Michigan, Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy of Connecticut, Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken of Minnesota, Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand of New York, Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota, Mary Landrieu of Louisiana, Mark Pryor of Arkansas, Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer of California, Joe Manchin of West Virginia, Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden of Oregon, Maria Cantwell of Washington, Robert Menendez of New Jersey, Jon Tester and John Walsh of Montana, Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, and Patrick Leahy and Bernie Sanders of Vermont, have written to Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe urging that "the USPS to delay implementation of any mail processing consolidations until feasibility studies are completed and there has been adequate time for public comment and consideration of those comments. Completed feasibility studies should include service standard impacts worksheets based on the revised service standards expected to be published on January 5, 2015. There is no reason that the USPS cannot delay its consolidations to provide time for the public to see and comment on the service standard worksheets. "It is only fair to allow the process to unfold in this way, and the USPS gains little by deciding to continue the consolidation process on its current, arbitrary timeline."


 [Washington Post](#): Dancing penguins, flashing holiday lights and a reminder to order shipping boxes and stamps. Those are the highlights of a new holiday smartphone application that the U.S. Postal Service launched Monday with the goal of attracting more business from direct-mail marketers. The idea: You can do this with your own

messages. USPS customers can use the app to scan the organization's 156,000 blue collection boxes throughout the country. In turn, they receive a "magical mailbox" message, like the one described above.


 [JD Supra](#): On Thursday morning, a unanimous Illinois Supreme Court affirmed in *Huber v. American Accounting Association*. As briefed, Huber presented the question of whether a postmark was sufficient proof of timely mailing to trigger Illinois' limited mailbox rule. But in the end, in an opinion by Justice Mary Jane Theis, the Court held that the plaintiff didn't have the prerequisite to present that question: a postmark. Our detailed summary of [the facts and underlying court decisions in Huber is here](#). Our [report on the oral argument is here](#).


 [Nextgov](#): The U.S. Postal Service is not filing its required yearly financial report because management does not know if business data was altered during a recent data breach, USPS officials said. As part of an ongoing investigation, "the Postal Service is seeking to confirm that the cyber intrusion did not affect the internal controls over financial reporting," USPS General Counsel Thomas Marshall said in a Nov. 28 late-filing notification. It is already known that attackers in September copied the Social Security numbers and other personal data on about 800,000 USPS employees. Compensation files might also have been compromised.


December 1, 2014

 [UN News Centre](#): Despite an overall decline in global letter mailings, traditional letter-post still contributes almost half of all postal revenues, the United Nations global post agency has reported, noting that in an ever-evolving communication landscape, postal services still remain a critical lynchpin for international networks. In a press release citing the latest postal statistics for 2013, the Universal Postal Union (UPU) today said that the downward trend in global letter-post traffic had been offset by a 5.8 per cent uptick in parcel volumes in all regions of the world, except Africa and the Asia-Pacific, where slight decreases were observed. José Ansón, a UPU economist, explained that infrastructure difficulties and competition could be to blame for the lagging figures in both regions. Although international letter-post volumes have decreased, Mr. Ansón added, the average weight of individual items is heavier as "a significant number of small packets generated by e-commerce seen to be moving through the letter-post stream." In all, he estimated, some 240 million small packets made up letter-post volumes in 2013, permitting postal services worldwide to reap the benefits of e-commerce. In addition, the UN agency continued, letter-post accounts for 43.4 per cent of global public postal revenues, which reached \$234 billion. In some regions, the contribution to revenues was even higher, reaching 59.6 per cent.

 [Office of the Inspector General](#): "Semiannual Report to Congress April 1 — September 30, 2014"


 [Reuters](#): Europe's postal firms need to slash costs and invest in new technology and services if they are to withstand the challenge of new entrants such as U.S. online retailer Amazon in the lucrative parcel delivery market. Companies such as Deutsche Post, whose DHL arm already offers a range of services including help with local duties and red tape on international deliveries, are best placed to cope, according to analysts. Those such as Britain's Royal Mail and Belgium's Bpost that are more focused on parcels and local markets, however, have much more to do, they added. Online shopping was supposed to be the big growth driver for postal firms in an age of instant communication. But shares in newly-privatized Royal Mail slumped 13 percent in two weeks after it warned last month that Amazon's bid to capture a bigger slice of deliveries would cut its revenue growth prospects by at least half.

 [The Hill](#): The 113th Congress is scheduled to conclude by Dec. 11, but the fight over government spending could keep lawmakers here closer to Christmas. Many members of Congress, particularly Democrats defeated in the November midterms, are dying to put Capitol Hill in the rear-view mirror. The Senate will revert to GOP power in January, leaving little time for Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) to clear a stack of the Obama's nominations.

 [Washington Examiner](#): "Think Tanks: Your mail isn't safe from Big Brother"

 [Post & Parcel](#): Finland's national postal operator Itella has said it has boosted its network of package locker terminals by 150 to prepare for this year's festive season. The company said its network of automated parcel

collection points has now grown to 460 locations as a result, and bringing the total number of postal service points to more than 1,400 in Finland. The development comes with the expectation that more than half of consumers in Finland will be shopping for their Christmas gifts online this year. Last year saw use of the package locker network tripling compared to the year before, Itella said.

 [The Register-Guard](#): Republicans, who will take control of the Senate next year and already control the House, have declared they will not work on major legislation with President Obama and Democrats in the wake of the president's executive order on immigration. They should reconsider. The GOP has much to gain, particularly in the 2016 presidential election, by showing voters they are no longer the party of "no" and that they are willing to do the public's business, starting with fixing the Postal Service.