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## **VALIDATED REALITY ECLIPSES PERCEPTION**

WASHINGTON, DC – In the nation's capital, whatever the facts, perception is reality. For the Postal Service, perception is how customers feel about their mail service, and reality is how well it's delivered. Both are independently measured. Neither has been better. The realities of a 95 percent on-time overnight delivery coupled with a 94 percent positive customer satisfaction perception validate the Postal Service's highest combination score ever.

"Each and every member of our dedicated postal family should be proud of this accomplishment," noted Vice President and Consumer Advocate Francia G. Smith as she detailed the surveys' results. "Our customers recognized that our employees have stepped up to the plate and delivered with a smile."

In making her remarks during the Postal Service Board of Governors at their meeting here, Smith said that the most recent customer satisfaction survey shows 94 percent of households nationwide reported having a positive view of the Postal Service – the highest score ever.

Smith also reported that overnight First-Class Mail maintained the milestone score of 95 percent on-time overnight delivery service performance during Postal Quarter IV, the period between May 17 and September 5, 2003. This is the sixth consecutive quarter First-Class Mail delivery hit the 94 percent and above benchmark, and the third consecutive quarter at 95.

### **Perception**

Customer Satisfaction Measurement for households is independently measured by The Gallup Organization which conducts surveys on a variety of postal issues and services from a customer's perspective. These include accuracy and consistency of delivery; retail clerk courtesy, knowledge, and responsiveness to customers; and telephone courtesy and accuracy of information provided, to name a few. The Postal Service uses survey results to identify opportunities to improve customer satisfaction.

## **Reality**

First-Class Mail delivery performance is measured externally and independently by IBM's Business Consulting Services unit, using the External First-Class measurement system, or EXFC. It provides an independent assessment of the time it takes a piece of First-Class Mail, once it is deposited into a collection box, to be delivered to one of the more than 140 million American homes, businesses and post office boxes that are serviced six days a week.

The Postal Service maintains a system of 85 management units by geographic areas, known as Performance Clusters (PCs). According to Smith, five PCs achieved on time delivery performance scores of 97 percent: Portland, OR; Erie, PA; Spokane, WA; Northland (Western WI and most of MN); and Hawkeye (Most of IA and the Rock Island Area of IL.).

In other action, the Board approved funding to automate the placement of lids on mail trays that hold newspapers, magazines, catalogs and other flat type mail. Until now, lids have been manually placed on flat mail trays that are transported extended distances. This approval to purchase 120 Automated Flat Tray Lidders will permit deployment to begin next March and be completed by June 2004.

The Board also approved funding to purchase 2,014 cargo vans to replace its aging fleet that transports mail from processing centers to delivery units in larger cities. Deployment will begin in April 2004 and be completed by March 2005.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that makes deliveries to about 140 million addresses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of more than \$66 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 43 percent of the world's mail volume - some 203 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year - and serves seven million customers each day at its 38,000 retail locations nationwide.

## EXFC Overnight Service Results

MAY 17, 2003 – SEPTEMBER 5, 2003 (PQ IV, FY 2003)

*EXFC externally measures collection box to mailbox delivery performance. EXFC continuously tests a panel of 463 ZIP Code areas selected on the basis of geographic and volume density from which 90% of First-Class volume originates and 80% destinate. EXFC is not a system-wide measurement of all First-Class Mail performance.*

PERFORMANCE CLUSTER	RESULTS	LOCAL 3-DIGIT ZIP CODES
AKRON	95	436, 442, 443, 445, 447, 449
ALABAMA	95	350, 351, 352, 358, 361, 366
ALASKA*	97	995, 996
ALBANY	96	120, 121, 122, 123, 128, 130, 131, 132, 135, 139
ALBUQUERQUE	96	870, 871
APPALACHIAN	96	240, 250, 251, 252, 253, 263, 264, 265
ARIZONA	96	850, 852, 853, 855, 856, 857
ARKANSAS	96	720, 721, 722, 723, 727
ATLANTA	94	300, 301, 302, 303
BALTIMORE	96	210, 211, 212, 214, 217, 219
BIG SKY	96	590, 591, 598
BOSTON	95	021, 024
CAPITAL	96	200, 206, 207, 208, 209
CARIBBEAN	90	009
CENTRAL FLORIDA	94	327, 328, 329, 334
CENTRAL ILLINOIS	96	604, 605, 616, 617, 618, 627
CENTRAL NEW JERSEY	94	077, 085, 086, 088, 089
CENTRAL PLAINS	96	515, 516, 666, 670, 671, 672, 680, 681, 685
CHICAGO	94	606, 607
CINCINNATI	95	410, 450, 451, 452, 454, 458, 470
CLEVELAND	93	440, 441
COLORADO/WYOMING	96	800, 801, 802, 803, 809, 820
COLUMBUS	94	430, 431, 432, 433
CONNECTICUT	95	060, 061, 062, 064, 069
DAKOTAS	96	570, 571, 573, 581
DALLAS	95	750, 751, 752, 754, 757
DETROIT	94	481, 482, 492
ERIE	97	159, 161, 164, 165, 166
FORT WORTH	96	760, 761, 762, 764, 791, 794
GATEWAY	95	620, 622, 630, 631, 633, 652
GREATER INDIANA	96	460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 466, 468, 469, 473, 478, 479
GREATER MICHIGAN	95	486, 488, 489, 490, 493, 494, 495
GREATER SOUTH CAROLINA	95	290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296
GREENSBORO	95	270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 286
HARRISBURG	95	170, 171, 172, 178, 180, 185, 187
HAWKEYE	97	500, 501, 502, 503, 507, 511, 520, 524, 612
HONOLULU	96	967, 968

\*No Overnight standard. Score shown is for two-day performance.

PERFORMANCE CLUSTER	RESULTS	LOCAL 3-DIGIT ZIP CODES
HOUSTON	95	770, 772, 773, 774
KENTUCKIANA	94	400, 401, 402, 405, 406, 471, 477
	95	530, 531, 532, 535, 537, 543, 544, 549
LAKELAND		
LANCASTER	94	176, 189, 193, 194, 196
LONG BEACH	96	902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908
LONG ISLAND	95	115, 117, 118, 119
LOS ANGELES	94	900
LOUISIANA	94	700, 701, 705, 708, 711
MAINE	94	040, 041, 043, 044, 045, 048
MID-AMERICA	95	640, 641, 658, 661, 662
MID-CAROLINAS	93	280, 281, 282, 283, 288, 297
MIDDLESEX-CENTRAL	95	015, 016, 017, 018, 019
MISSISSIPPI	95	386, 390, 391, 392, 395
NEVADA-SIERRA	96	890, 891, 895
NEW HAMPSHIRE	95	030, 031, 032, 033, 034, 038
NEW YORK	93	100, 104
NORTH FLORIDA	95	320, 321, 322, 323, 325, 326
NORTHERN ILLINOIS	94	600, 601, 602, 603, 611
NORTHERN NEW JERSEY	93	070, 071, 072, 073, 074, 075, 076, 078, 079
NORTHERN VIRGINIA	96	201, 220, 221, 222, 223
NORTHLAND	97	540, 546, 550, 551, 553, 554, 559, 563
OAKLAND	96	945, 946, 947, 948
OKLAHOMA	95	730, 731, 740, 741, 743
PHILADELPHIA	94	190, 191
PITTSBURGH	96	150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 156
PORTLAND	97	970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 986
RICHMOND	95	224, 225, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 238
RIO GRANDE	95	765, 767, 780, 781, 782, 784, 786, 787, 788, 789, 797, 799
ROYAL OAK	93	480, 483, 484, 485
SACRAMENTO	96	952, 956, 957, 958
SALT LAKE CITY	95	840, 841, 844
SAN DIEGO	96	919, 920, 921, 924
SAN FRANCISCO	96	940, 941, 943, 944, 949
SAN JOSE	95	933, 937, 939, 950, 951
SANTA ANA	95	917, 918, 926, 927, 928
SEATTLE	95	980, 981, 982, 984, 985
SOUTH FLORIDA	95	330, 331, 332, 333
SOUTH GEORGIA	95	309, 310, 312, 314, 319
SOUTH JERSEY	94	080, 081, 082, 083, 084, 197, 198
SOUTHEAST NEW ENGLAND	94	020, 023, 027, 028, 029
SPOKANE	97	835, 837, 838, 990, 991, 992, 994
SPRINGFIELD	96	010, 011, 012, 013, 050, 054, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 341, 342, 346
SUNCOAST	95	346
TENNESSEE	94	370, 371, 372, 374, 379, 380, 381
TRIBORO	93	110, 112, 113, 114, 116
VAN NUYS	96	911, 913, 914, 915, 916, 930, 931
WESTCHESTER	94	105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 125
WESTERN NEW YORK	95	140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146