



POSTAL NEWS

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WASHINGTON, DC, TO HOST NATIONAL POSTAL FORUM **RE-LAUNCH IN SEPTEMBER 2004** **INDUSTRY EMBRACES CHANGES AS FORUM** **SHIFTS TO ONCE-A-YEAR SCHEDULE**

WASHINGTON, DC -- Mailing industry response to the decision to cancel the Spring 2004 National Postal Forum and move to a once-a-year schedule for the event has been overwhelmingly positive, according to United States Postal Service and National Postal Forum officials. The decision to make the change, officials agreed, was both timely and responsive to the needs of business mailers and mail center administrators.

"A key component of successful postal transformation," said Postal Service Chief Marketing Officer Anita Bizzotto, "is understanding how to better respond to our customers' needs. As we applied the principles of transformation to our customer event strategies, it became clear that we could enhance the impact of the Forum and help our customers make better use of their resources by focusing on a single, world-class gathering."

"We have a long-standing commitment to continuous improvement of our event," stated Peter Lyons, Chairman of the Board of the National Postal Forum Inc., a non-profit corporation that runs the mailing conference. "By focusing our 2004 effort on Washington, DC, and its new convention center, we're going to be able to deliver to attendees and exhibitors value and an exceptional experience in terms of facilities, amenities, and excitement."

In the November 22 announcement of the schedule change, postal officials set the re-launch of the Forum for September 19, 2004, at the Washington, DC, Convention Center. The response from the industry was immediate and overwhelmingly positive, officials said.

"The Forum has always been an important event for our members," said Robert O'Brien, co-chairman of the Mailers' Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC), which is sponsored by the Postmaster General. "These changes, and its location in Washington next fall, make for a unique opportunity for the 55 mailing associations that MTAC represents. I anticipate an enthusiastic turnout from the entire postal community."

Some mailers indicated that the Forum would emerge as a venue for other customer and industry meetings that, in the past, have been held independently.

“Last September in Kansas City,” said Crain Communications’ Joyce McGarvey, who heads a Periodical Mailers’ Task Force, “we tested the meeting-within-a-meeting concept, and were pleasantly surprised. Nearly 200 periodicals mailers came to the Forum’s Periodicals Day. In Washington, there will be a critical mass of mailers that should expand this kind of gathering. Standard mailers, remittance mailers, and package service providers should all find the Forum an improved venue in which to bring themselves together.”

Exhibitors, too, expressed satisfaction with the decision and the direction of the Forum.

“For companies like ours,” said Judy Marks, President of Lockheed Martin Distribution Technologies and a member of the Mailing Industry Task Force Steering Committee, “return on investment is important when deciding whether to participate. I’m delighted with the plan to focus on Washington and the new convention center, because it will be an excellent showcase for our technologies.

“From the Task Force perspective,” added Marks, “the Washington event also works well, because it provides the greatest stage in the country to present a progress report on our new objectives for revenue growth and mail effectiveness.”

Officials from the Postal Service and the Forum said that strategizing had already begun on enhancements to all aspects of the 2004 Forum.

“With a brand-new site, outstanding hotels close by, and a city that’s never more attractive than in September, we’ve got wonderful assets to work with,” said Michael Genick, the Forum’s Executive Director. “It’s the recipe for a truly great event.”

“Our customers clearly like the new direction,” added John Wargo, Postal Service Vice President for Service and Market Development. “Over the coming months, we’re going to be listening and talking to them to see how we can exceed their already high expectations.”

For more information about the Fall 2004 National Postal Forum and how to register, visit www.npf.org, or call the Forum at 703-218-5015.