UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE — POSTAL NEWS

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# U.S. POSTAL SERVICE QUICKLY RE-ESTABLISHING MAIL SERVICE FOLLOWING HURRICANE RITA

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Postal Service is working overtime to reconnect people affected by Hurricane Rita with their mail. Working with local, state and federal officials, the Postal Service is returning mail operations to normal service where it is safe to do so, including Houston, where delivery was back to 100 percent on Monday.

"Despite the added impact of Hurricane Rita, delivery service along the Gulf Coast is rapidly being restored," said Postmaster General John E. Potter during Tuesday's USPS Board of Governors Meeting in Washington, DC. "Although we are continuing our efforts to restore mail service to the affected areas, there is still a lot of work to be done."

Mail service remains suspended in all areas where mandatory evacuation orders are still in effect, including delivery, collection, Post Office box and retail services, and mail processing.

In the hardest hit areas of Texas, local postal officials said the biggest challenge for postal operations is the lack of power in many areas. The City of Beaumont was still without power on Monday and remained under mandatory evacuation order. In Louisiana, flooding and severe wind damage in the Southwest part of the state is hampering operations. The Lake Charles area was the most affected, with six post offices flooded and the city closed to all but essential personnel – which includes postal employees. In both Louisiana and Texas, plans are being developed for distribution of October Social Security checks in those areas that remain without delivery service.

Those seeking the latest information on service updates can find it at: http://www.usps.com/communications/news/serviceupdates.htm. Postal employees affected by mandatory evacuation orders are being asked to monitor the USPS National Emergency Notification Hotline (1-888-363-7462) for work reporting information.

As was the case during Hurricane Katrina, the Postal Service took steps to protect the mail, employees and equipment before Rita's arrival. Those actions included moving mail and equipment to higher ground to protect from flooding and holding mail bound for the areas in Rita's path at its place of origin.

Postal customers unable to receive delivery at their permanent address due to Hurricanes Rita or Katrina are being asked to file a change-of-address. The quickest and easiest way is to do this electronically by going to www.usps.com or by calling 1800-ASK-USPS (1-800-275-8777). Hurricane victims in areas without telephone or internet service should go to the nearest post office, complete a

change-of-address form, and submit to a postal Retail Associate at the counter or mail it—it's postage free.

Since 1775, the Postal Service and its predecessor, the Post Office Department, has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that visits 142 million homes and businesses every day, six days a week and is the only service provider delivering 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 $69 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mailing and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume—some 206 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves seven and a half million customers each day at its 37,000 retail locations nationwide. Its website, usps.com, attracts more than 21 million visitors each month.

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