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U.S. POSTAL SERVICE AND UNIONS REACH AGREEMENT ON WORK ISSUES ARISING FROM HURRICANE KATRINA

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Postal Service and two of its unions have reached agreements that address employee reassignment and other work issues resulting from Hurricane Katrina. The agreements – which include guidelines on postal workers seeking employment in new locations due to Katrina’s destruction and evacuations – are with the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU).

The specific provisions in the union agreements (known as “memorandums of understanding” or MOU’s) differ, but the main intent of both MOU’s is to minimize the effects of dislocation and inconvenience to employees while maintaining the efficiency of Postal Service operations in Katrina’s aftermath. Other common general principles include the following:

- Employees who are allowed to work where they have relocated will be treated as voluntary temporary reassignments.
- Affected employees may be employed as needed at any location in order to provide employment and maintain work efficiency.
- Affected employees will be given an opportunity to seek permanent voluntary transfer to other work locations.
- A “liberal leave” policy is in effect for affected employees

The MOU’s define affected employees as a “regular work force employee in a craft represented by (the union) whose official duty station on September 2, 2005, was in an office that curtailed all operations due to Hurricane Katrina.”

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.