



POSTAL NEWS

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U.S. POSTAL SERVICE DELIVERS HIGH-TECH ALTERNATIVE WAY OF COMMUNICATING FOR DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING EMPLOYEES

*Largest deployment of this technology anywhere reflects Postal Service's
commitment to employee diversity and customer service*

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Postal Service – one of the nation's largest employers of people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing – is offering new technology to allow its employees to better communicate with each other. Two types of video interpreting services are being installed at postal facilities across the country, allowing approximately 4,000 postal employees who are deaf or hard-of-hearing to communicate with supervisors, co-workers and others in real-time without having to bring in on-site interpreters or rely on text-based telephone systems.

"This project reflects the Postal Service commitment to employee diversity," said Postmaster General John E. Potter. "Our goal is to maintain an environment where employees from diverse backgrounds can contribute, assume leadership roles, and help us meet our business objectives and serve our customers."

The new services use two forms of web-based sign language interpreting technology: Sorenson Video Remote Interpreting® (VRI) – for communication when participants are in the same location and Sorenson Video Relay Service® (VRS) – for communication when participants are in different locations. Both services are being phased in at postal facilities nationwide through a contract with Sorenson Communications, a leader in communication services for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community. This is the first and largest deployment of its kind using this technology in the public or private sector.

Sorenson VRI is a fee-based video remote interpreting service that provides an alternative to bringing in interpreters to postal facilities. In the past, scheduling interpreting services to meet the Postal Service operating hours (24 hours a day, seven days per week, including holidays) was a recurring challenge. VRI is a more immediate and consistent interpreting service.

Sorenson VRS is a free video relay service that makes it possible for deaf and hard-of-hearing callers to place calls to hearing individuals through a videophone and TV. Deaf or hard-of-hearing users see a sign-language video interpreter on their TV and signs to the interpreter, who then contacts the hearing user via a standard phone line and relays the conversation between the two parties.

Because employees using VRI and VRS communicate in sign language, they are able to more fully express themselves – through facial expressions and other body language – which cannot be expressed in text-based communication services, such as TTY.

“We are proud to partner with the U.S. Postal Service to provide two unique video communication solutions to meet the needs of their employees,” said Pat Nola, President and CEO of Sorenson Communications. “These technologies afford deaf individuals with a more level playing field in the workplace and we applaud the Postal Service for recognizing the value of diverse employees.”

The two video interpreting services are currently available at 25 postal facilities, with additional facilities receiving the services throughout this year.

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Note: Reporters seeking additional information about Sorenson Communications can contact Lisa Harrison Tate, 801-287-9897, ltate@sorenson.com.

About the U.S. Postal Service:

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 \$70 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.

About Sorenson Communications:

Sorenson Communications™ (www.sorenson.com) is a provider of industry-leading communication offerings including Sorenson Video Relay Service® (VRS), the company’s line of videophones, and Sorenson IP Relay™ (siprelay). Sorenson VRS (www.sorensonvrs.com) enables deaf callers to conduct video relay conversations with hearing friends, business colleagues, and family members through a qualified American Sign Language interpreter. The company’s Sorenson VP-100 is the first consumer-based broadband videophone appliance specifically designed for deaf individuals. Sorenson IP Relay (www.siprelay.com) allows deaf and hard-of-hearing users to place instant text-based relay calls from a PC or mobile device to any telephone user.

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