



POSTAL NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 24, 2006

Contact: Media Relations
202-268-2155
News Release No. 06-022
www.usps.com

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE STRESSES DEADLINES FOR MAILING ABSENTEE BALLOTS TO DISPLACED LOUISIANA VOTERS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE NEXT MONTH

WASHINGTON – The hurricanes that battered the Gulf Coast last fall displaced literally thousands of Louisiana residents, many of whom may still be eligible to vote in upcoming primary and general elections in their home state.

Residents who are registered to vote in Louisiana and have not registered to vote in the state where they may be living temporarily should contact the Louisiana Secretary of State's Office to learn about voting by absentee ballot, a U.S. Postal Service official said today.

The Postal Service is working with the Louisiana Secretary of State's Election Division to make certain the absentee ballots are distributed and received in a timely manner. The Postal Service plays no role in how elections are carried out in the United States, although it is fully authorized to inform and educate election officials about USPS products and services available.

"We are very thankful for the special assistance that the U.S. Postal Service is providing our displaced voters during this very critical election cycle," Louisiana Secretary of State Al Ater said. "We want to let our voters know that their requests for ballots, the mailing of their ballots, and receipt of their ballots will be done in a timely manner to ensure that they are counted in these elections."

Delores Killete, Postal Service Vice President and Consumer Advocate, asked voters to mail by the recommended deadlines. Absentee ballots must be received in the respective parish registrar's office by March 31 in order to be counted in the April 1 parish primary elections for parishes other than Orleans. Ballots should be mailed by Monday, March 27 at the latest.

For the April 22 Orleans municipal election, absentee ballots must be received by the Orleans registrar's office or the Secretary of State's Office by April 21. These ballots should be mailed by Monday, April 17, to be delivered on time. Some new laws provide for a one day extension of these deadlines.

"For the second year in a row, the independent research organization Ponemon Institute has determined that taxpayers rank the U.S. Postal Service number one among federal agencies for protecting and ensuring their privacy. Mail is a dependable and protected way to connect and communicate with voters," Killete said. "Help us make your voice heard. Mail on time."

"The Postal Service has taken a number of steps to help Louisiana voters and candidates connect through the mail," Killete said. Posters publicizing the mailing deadlines are being placed in all 38,000 Post Offices across the country. The Postal Service has lifted the embargo on bulk rate campaign and political mailings, making it easier for candidates to mail campaign pieces. The U.S. Postal Inspection Service will be in Louisiana helping to monitor the flow of absentee ballots.

Displaced voters needing additional information or an absentee ballot should contact the Louisiana Secretary of State Elections Division: 1-800-883-2805; elections@sos.louisiana.gov; or by mail:
PO BOX 94125
BATON ROUGE LA 70804-9125

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 more than 144 million homes and businesses every day 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 \$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 U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume—some 212 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves seven million customers each day at its 37,000 retail locations nationwide.