



POSTAL NEWS

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CUSTOMIZED POSTAGE GOES COMMERCIAL

U.S. Postal Service expands popular personalized postage for businesses

WASHINGTON – Businesses across the country now have one more way to literally send a message about their company and products with the expansion of the U.S. Postal Service’s popular customized postage program.

Customized postage allows a customer to personalize postage with pictures or images using Customized PC Postage® technology. The Postal Service today signed contracts with three qualified PC Postage® vendors able to produce customized postage to be used on First-Class Mail, Priority Mail and Express Mail for personal and commercial use.

Endicia, Zazzle and Stamps.com will add the commercial application to their existing agreements for the production of postage for personal use, said Nick Barranca, Vice President, Product Development.

“Expanding the way customized postage can be used is a bonus for businesses who want to create awareness for their products or services, build their brand and develop strong customer relationships,” Barranca said.

This is the third phase of the market test for customized postage. It will run through May 16, 2007 with an option for the Postal Service to extend the test for a second year. The third test removes the restrictions around commercial images that were in place for the second market test.

The first two phases of the test, which began in 2004, allowed the Postal Service and qualified vendors to determine the viability of the product and to gauge the interest of consumers in creating their own personalized postage.

“We are very pleased with the way customers have responded to this option. We have seen an increase in personal correspondence,” Barranca said. “This is one more way the Postal Service is reaching out to meet the needs and interests of our customers.”

Customized postage has two parts: a customer-supplied image and a state-of-the-art secure bar code. All customized postage is compatible with the Postal Service's automated mail processing systems.

Like postage meters, PC Postage® facilitates customer access to postage payment and use of the mail. PC Postage® is not a stamp and the use of customized postage will not affect the Postal Service's production or commitment to postage stamps, Barranca said.

"We want to make sure that anyone we authorize has the ability to produce postage in an efficient way," he said. "While we continue to strive to meet the needs of our customers, we want to make sure that any product also meets our standards for quality and security."

The Postal Service will require vendors to produce a product that meets current postal regulations and conclusively prove that all images produced and services provided abide by all federal laws, including copyright laws.

Authorized vendors will determine pricing and are expected to price their products based on the value provided to the consumer. The Postal Service's role is to authorize and monitor qualified providers.

Since 1775, the Postal Service and its predecessor, the Post Office Department, have 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.

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