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**NATIONAL NEWSPAPER AWARD OF EXCELLENCE PRESENTED TO  
U.S. POSTAL SERVICE EMPLOYEE**

**National Winner Best Represents the Spirit of Benjamin Franklin**

WASHINGTON –Gulfport, MS, Mailing Standards Specialist Jerry Hawk has been selected as the national winner of the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Benjamin Franklin Community Newspaper and Postal Service Partnership Award of Excellence. The award was presented today by Postmaster General John E. Potter; National Newspaper Association (NNA) President Bob Sweeney and NNA Postal Committee Chair Max Heath during the NNA's 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Government Affairs Conference at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.



The Benjamin Franklin Award of Excellence is presented to a Postal Service employee who best represents the spirit of Benjamin Franklin, one of our country's founders and a newspaper publisher, statesman and the first Postmaster General. It was Franklin's commitment and dedication to service that helped set standards by which community newspapers and the Postal Service operate today.

NNA member newspapers nominate local Postal Service employees. Judges in each state select winners from those nominations. NNA's Postal Committee — chaired by Max Heath of Landmark Community Newspaper in Shelbyville, KY — selected Hawk from among the state winners as the national winner.

"I congratulate Jerry. This award honors the postal employee who has done the most to strengthen the partnership between the Postal Service and community newspapers," said PMG Potter.

"I also want to thank the Prentiss Mississippi Headlight newspaper for nominating Mr. Hawk. I read the nomination letter from Editor and Publisher, Patsy Speights, and was particularly pleased to read how Mr. Hawk helped the newspaper solve problems," said Potter. "Jerry is an example of what the Postal Service is accomplishing nationally with our Transformation Plan,"

In Speights' nomination, she stated "Jerry deals with people and problems in a quiet, efficient manner. Our relationship stretches over 25 years." Speights continued, "Jerry was extremely helpful last spring in training small newspapers in Mississippi on how to use the Postal Service Postal Wizard program — a USPS electronic program that can assist mailers in preparing postage statements."

"Jerry has patiently guided me through all the rules, regulations and requirements of the Domestic Mail Manual with a great sense of humor and understanding. He is most deserving of this prestigious award," Speights said.

Hawk is a 30-year Postal Service veteran. He began his career as a mail handler in Gulfport, MS, and has been a mailing standards specialist in Gulfport since 1992.

"Thanks for recognizing a job well done by a very dedicated employee," said Sonja A. Lee, Hawk's supervisor and Business Mail Entry Analyst for the Postal Service's Mississippi District. "I'm thrilled that Jerry is receiving this award. He recently received an award for having saved 3000 hours of sick leave, an indication of his dedication to his job. He always focuses on the goals and has a vision for the future of the Postal Service to be as good as it can be," she said.

Prior to joining the Postal Service, Hawk served in the U.S. Navy aboard ammunition ship USS Nitro. He also worked as a printer/pressman for the local newspaper, *The Daily Herald*. Hawk is very active in his community, is a board member of the Gulfport Postal Customer Council, and attends St Joseph Catholic Church. Hawk and his wife, Betty, have two children. Jeremy is an attorney in Madison, MS, and Jena, who is currently working on her masters program at the University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS.

"I am honored to be selected to receive the prestigious Benjamin Franklin Community Newspaper Award," said Hawk. "The award is very special since I know all the work that goes into publishing a newspaper and the labor that is involved in the Postal Service to get these products delivered. I am grateful to Editor Patsy Speights, and the employees of Prentiss Headlight Newspaper for recommending me for this honor," he said.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency, the Postal Service makes deliveries to about 141 million addresses every day and is the only service provider to deliver 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 \$68 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. Moreover, today's postage rates will remain stable until at least 2006. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 43 percent of the world's mail volume - some 202 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year - and serves seven million customers each day at its 38,000 retail locations nationwide.

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