



## POSTAL NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Sept. 22, 2008

Media Contact: Joanne Veto  
(O) 202-268-3118  
(C) 202-285-2168  
[joanne.m.veto@usps.gov](mailto:joanne.m.veto@usps.gov)  
[usps.com/news](http://usps.com/news)  
Release No. 08-095

### **Postal Service Encourages Voters to 'Mail Early'**

*Recommended mailing dates for overseas military members fast approaching*

WASHINGTON, DC – With more than 31 million ballots expected to be mailed this fall, the U.S. Postal Service is encouraging voters to “mail early” this election season.

Voters are asked to mail completed absentee ballots five days before they are due to ensure the safe, timely delivery of their vote. Americans overseas, including men and women in the Armed Services, should plan on sending ballots back at least two weeks before Nov. 4, the date of the federal general election. Service members stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan are asked to mail completed ballots by Sept. 30, where possible.

“Even in times of war, we have delivered the most fundamental symbol of democracy – a ballot. The Postal Service recognizes the important role mail plays in the election process,” said Pat Donahoe, deputy postmaster general and chief operating officer. “We’re committed to providing voters with first-class service. Help us make sure your voice is heard and counted. Please mail early.”

Americans with busy lifestyles and the desire for flexibility are seeking voting options. Today, 28 states allow individuals to vote by mail via absentee ballot, without requiring an excuse or explanation; three additional states allow each county within the state to offer voting by mail as an option. In the state of Washington, 36 of its 39 counties are completely vote by mail. Oregon is the only state in the country that casts ballots exclusively by mail.

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. The non-partisan "Mailing Resources Center for Election Officials," a well-trained sales force, mail acceptance employees and employees with expertise in designing election mail pieces have been providing reliable, trusted expertise to election officials across the country, Donahoe said.

“We have been working with local election officials and secretaries of states for almost two years in a number of areas to ensure that election mail is created that meets USPS standards and allows for efficient processing and delivery of the mail,” he said.

Service members and Americans living abroad can mail their completed ballots free of charge by bringing the ballot to APO/FPO Post Offices or to a consulate of the United States.

The Postal Service also offers the following suggestions for voters this fall:

- Make sure to use proper postage and that the stamp appears in the upper right hand corner on the front of the envelope.
- Place completed ballots inside the envelope correctly. Most return envelopes for ballots have a clear window on the front so the mailing address can be clearly seen.
- Check with local election offices for rules on requesting and completing absentee ballots.
- Visit the state’s website online to find out where election offices are located in the state and to get information governing voting by mail.

To visit the Mailing Resources Center for Election Officials center, please log on to:  
[www.usps.com/electionmail](http://www.usps.com/electionmail).

An Audio News Release and script for this press release is available in the Postal Service Newsroom  
[www.usps.com/communications/newsroom/welcome.htm](http://www.usps.com/communications/newsroom/welcome.htm)

# # #

**Please Note:** For broadcast quality video and audio, photo stills and other media resources, visit the USPS Newsroom at  
[www.usps.com/communications/newsroom/welcome.htm](http://www.usps.com/communications/newsroom/welcome.htm).

An independent federal agency, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation, 146 million homes and businesses, six days a week. It has 37,000 retail locations and relies on the sale of postage, products and services, not tax dollars, to pay for operating expenses. The Postal Service has annual revenue of \$75 billion and delivers nearly half the world's mail.