



POSTAL NEWS

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**REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE ROBERT F. RIDER
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
OPEN SESSION BOARD MEETING
JANUARY 7, 2003**

Good morning Board members. And good morning to all of you in the audience. From my perspective as Chairman of the Board of Governors, I want to take note of two items of interest.

First, our meeting today marks the beginning of the new year; a year which I believe holds great promise for moving the Postal Service closer toward the transformation we embarked on last year. Tomorrow, the President's Commission on the Postal Service begins its task of considering changes appropriate to ensure the long-term viability of the Postal Service.

I know the members of the Board join me in thanking the President for establishing this Commission, especially given pressing international demands and issues of domestic security within our own borders. The fact that this Commission is moving quickly to perform its assigned tasks is yet another positive indication that we all recognize that time is of the essence if we are to continue the transformation of the United States Postal Service.

When the Commission was announced last month, I was honored to represent the Governors at the press conference. I was impressed by the comments of Treasury Undersecretary Peter Fisher and Co-Chairman James Johnson. In their remarks, they underscored that the Postal Service is not broken, and that the task of the Commission is not to privatize the Postal Service. Instead, they emphasized that the Commission sincerely wants to determine how the Postal Service can execute its mission more efficiently and cost-effectively in the future. Mr. Johnson emphasized that he and his colleagues approach their work with no predeterminations.

This past year has been a time of challenge and a time of sacrifice for the Postal Service. We have reduced our costs in the face of sharply declining mail volume and revenues. At the same time, we have seen our service performance reach historic highs.

All across the nation, our postmasters, managers and employees have risen to unforeseen challenges. In the times of human tragedy and natural disaster, our postmasters, managers and employees put forth the extra effort, made the sacrifices, and kept the nation's mail moving.

I am proud of what we all have accomplished this year and so are the American people we serve. But I also believe this next year promises continued progress in our efforts to transform the Postal Service by improving service, enhancing and developing existing products and services and improving our financial posture.

And that brings me to my second comment which is to note that today marks my final meeting as Chairman of the Board of Governors. Later this morning, we will elect a new Chairman who will take over the responsibility of leading and guiding the Board and postal management in the decisions we must make in the future.

But after seven years as a member, Vice Chairman and Chairman of the Board of Governors, I am, confident that each of us on the Board and the Postmaster General and his management team will continue to make wise and fruitful decisions as we move this institution toward transformation. To you, the members of the Board, I thank you all for your energetic support and dedication and for making my tenure as Chairman both memorable and thoroughly enjoyable.

This concludes my comments. And now I invite the Postmaster General to give us his remarks.