



POSTAL NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 14, 2004

Contact: Media Relations
202-268-2155
News Release No. 04-022
www.usps.com

POSTAL SERVICE BRACES FOR ANNUAL

LAST-MINUTE TAX FILER'S FRENZY

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Postal Service is bracing for tomorrow's annual Tax Night rush as thousands of deadline-defying filers show up at many of the nation's Post Offices determined to get their tax returns postmarked by April 15.

More than 131 million Federal tax returns are expected to be filed this year. A great number of those will be sent through the U.S. Postal Service, and many of those will be mailed at the last minute.

To assist last minute filers, the Postal Service's toll-free telephone line (1-800-ASK-USPS) provides customers 24-hour access to find near-by post offices and collection boxes with extended hours. More than 600,000 calls are expected on April 15.

A Post Office locator is also available on www.usps.com.

There is always a zany celebration of sorts around many post offices as a surge of late filers rush to beat the filing deadline. This year is no exception. Here is a sampling of the year's festivities:

- Des Moines Iowa. – The Postal Customer Advisory Council will serve Blue Bunny Ice Cream in the lobby of the post office from 9 a.m. until noon.
- Ft. Wayne, In. – The "Disney on Ice" production of *Monsters Inc.* is playing at the Ft. Wayne Coliseum and a uniformed postal employee will be on duty at the Coliseum between 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. to accept tax returns on April 15. The first 50 people handing over their returns will receive a pre-show pass to meet characters of the show. And all patrons who bring their tax returns to mail will receive a voucher to receive a fee ticket to that night's show when they purchase a ticket, courtesy of the show's producers.
- Mansfield, Ohio – A Customer/Employee Appreciation Day with the local Postal Customer Advisory Council features hot dogs, popcorn, health screenings and even stress massages as the office remains open until midnight.

- San Mateo, Calif. – A local radio station is sponsoring a dunk tank with an IRS agent in the dunk seat! School bands will serenade; Uncle Sam will be mingling and refreshments will be in abundance.
- Erie, Pa. – Erie's Class AA baseball team, the Erie SeaWolves have their home opening game on April 15. There will be a mobile Post Office at the field where people can mail their tax returns on the way into the game. There will even be a special cancellation with the SeaWolves emblem in the postmark. At the Erie downtown station, the Junior Philharmonic will play from 5:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.
- Arlington, Va. – The Clarendon community of Arlington holds its annual Tax Blues festival complete with music, dancing, and food right next to the Post Office.

“In the meanwhile, as you drop your tax returns off, remember that the Postal Service doesn't receive any of those tax dollars to subsidize its operations – and hasn't since 1982,” says Azeezaly Jaffer, Vice President of Public Affairs and Communications. “For 225 years the Postal Service has been America's trusted delivery service, on Tax Night and every day.”

The Postal Service continues to accomplish milestones in its Transformation Plan to serve the American people better than ever. Customer satisfaction and service is at an all-time high with 95 percent on-time delivery. Postage rates, too, will remain stable at current rates until at least 2006. Changes in the law governing the Postal Service are currently being considered in Congress, so maybe next year's hoopla at the Post Office on Tax Night could be celebrating a new chapter in the transformation of the Postal Service.

TIPS ON MAILING TAX FORMS

- Use First-Class postage. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) recognizes the inexpensive First-Class letter postmark as proof that a return has been mailed on time.
- Use pre-addressed labels where possible. Write clearly. Take special care to ensure that handwritten envelopes are legible.
- Include a return address.
- Affix sufficient postage. One ounce is 37 cents; each additional ounce up to 13 ounces costs an additional 23 cents.
- Double-check postage. Weigh any return that feels heavier than one ounce. Tax agencies do not accept postage due mail; tax returns bearing insufficient postage will be returned—meaning taxpayers will be penalized for filing late tax returns.
- Avoid the mad rush at the post office. Mail returns in local mail collection boxes, but remember to make certain that the posted pick-up time has not passed to ensure returns will have an April 15 postmark.
- For customers who send original receipts to tax agencies, registered mail is a good choice.
- Make certain bulky envelopes are securely sealed.