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## **20 Billion in 30 Days** *Today's Holidays Need Today's Mail*

WASHINGTON, DC — In two short days, the U.S. Postal Service begins to deliver 20 billion pieces of mail across the country and around the world, a task that requires more than 200,000 trucks, a 30 percent increase in air cargo transport, 37,000 Post Offices and 700,000 employees.

All to make sure that holiday cheer arrives on time.

The Postal Service expects to deliver 20 billion pieces of mail between Thanksgiving and Christmas this year, with the busiest mailing day set for Monday, Dec. 17. More than 275 million cards and letters should be mailed that day, more than three times the average daily volume of 82 million. Total mail volume (cards, letters, catalogs, packages, magazines) for the busiest day should approach 1 billion, up from an average daily volume of 703 million pieces.

The busiest delivery day will be Wednesday, Dec. 19. Staff at the National Operations Center report for "24-7 duty" on Dec. 1 to help navigate, literally, mail movement around the world.

"This is one of the most challenging and exciting times of the year for us," said Pat Donahoe, deputy postmaster general and chief operating officer. "Whether you're sending a holiday card to Idaho or a care package to Iraq, our employees across the country are committed to success."

In addition to the logistics of moving and delivering all this mail, the Postal Service will have extended hours at more than 7,000 Post Offices. Customers will be able to purchase stamps online or at more than 55,000 alternate access points, including banks, grocery stores, drug stores and Automated Postal Centers (APCs).

APCs handle 80 percent of the same transactions customers can conduct in a Post Office and are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for added customer convenience. Packages can be mailed regardless of Post Office hours using these self-service kiosks, located in thousands of Post Office lobbies across the country. APCs are as easy to use as an ATM, but without the fees. Many APCs let customers conduct business in Spanish.

And, as the way Americans celebrate the holidays change, the Postal Service is changing as well. There are working mothers, single fathers, blended families. Families are multi-cultural, multi-generational and multi-taskers. They are plugged in, wireless, blogging, podcasting and texting.

That's today's holidays. The Postal Service has products and choices to help meet these growing and changing needs.

"In the time it takes you to download a tune or a video for your iPod, you can create your own postage and design unique greeting cards online. You can order free, environmentally friendly packaging or find the nearest Post Office with late hours while you're watching the late, late show," said Delores Killelte, vice president and consumer advocate. "That's today's mail."

With 37,000 Post Offices around the country and a virtual Post Office only a click away, the Postal Service, like Santa, is everywhere during the holidays. And like Santa, the Postal Service will be delivering mail on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Donahoe stressed that mailing early is key, recommending that all First-Class Mail and Priority Mail be sent by Dec. 20 and that Express Mail be sent by Dec. 22. Mail sent by Parcel Post, the most economical service, should be in the mail by Dec. 15.

Mail destined for servicemen and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan should be sent by Dec. 4. Mail destined for any other military installation around the world should be mailed no later than Dec. 18. All military mail, regardless of destination, is sent at domestic mail rates.

“Marking these dates and taking advantage of the convenience of our online products and services will give you something you really can use this time of year,” Donahoe said. “More time.”

**Visit the Holiday Press Room at [usps.com](http://usps.com)**

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**Please Note:** Three fact sheets in support of this news release, a b-roll package and audio clips are available in the Holiday Press Room at [usps.com](http://usps.com). For additional broadcast quality video and audio, photo stills and other media resources, visit the USPS Newsroom at [www.usps.com/news](http://www.usps.com/news).

An independent federal agency, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that visits 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 to pay for operating expenses, not tax dollars. The Postal Service has annual revenues of \$75 billion and delivers nearly half the world's mail.