



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Oct. 28, 2008

Media Contact: Joanne Veto
(O) 202-268-3118
(C) 202-285-2168
joanne.m.veto@usps.gov
usps.com/news
Release No. 08-112

'Read, Respond, Recycle' Mail

U.S. Postal Service Brings Paper Recycling to Post Office Lobbies

CHICAGO — The “Three Rs” take on a more modern meaning today as the U.S. Postal Service makes it easier for Post Office box customers across the country to recycle their mail.

“Read, Respond, Recycle” is the banner under which the Postal Service will reach out to postal customers with a convenient, environmentally responsible alternative to bringing home or discarding their mail.

The Postal Service has a long and proud environmental record, and annually recycles more than 1 million tons of paper, plastic and other materials. The Post Office Box Lobby Recycling program launched here today builds on the tremendous success of similar programs that have been ongoing in the northeast part of the United States for more than 10 years.

The PO Box Lobby Recycling program places secure recycling bins in Post Office lobbies. All bins are locked with a key and the opening is slim – about the width of a news magazine. PO Box customers are encouraged to remove and open their mail (read), take whatever action is necessary (respond) and simply place the rest of their mail into the bin (recycle).

This program has been thoroughly tested and presents no risk to mail security or customer privacy and does not effect postal operations or costs, according to Postmaster General John Potter.

“The message today is simple. Mail is recyclable,” Potter said. “We are committed to helping consumers ‘go green’ through a comprehensive approach to mail production, delivery and recycling that helps create a sustainable future for generations to come.”

Potter was joined at the event by U.S. Rep. Danny K. Davis, chairman of the House Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce, Postal Service and the District of Columbia.

“The lobby recycling program is an important milestone in our nation’s turn to an environmentally responsible economy. The Postal Service has been a consistent leader in this effort since the days of Benjamin Franklin, our first Postmaster General. Through the use of alternative fuel vehicles and recycling programs, the USPS has continued that tradition,” said Congressman Davis. “By its sheer size and universal presence, postal initiatives have direct impact on the economy, the environment and public policy. It is my hope that through lobby recycling, Postmaster General Potter and the Postal Service are helping to set a standard for both the public and private sectors.”

The Chicago launch officially opens the first of three phases of PO Box Lobby Recycling, adding 279 new sites to the more than 3,800 existing sites. The program will expand nationally in the future.

Mailers have responded favorably to the program as well. Earlier this month, *Highlights for Children* magazine announced it would use the “Read, Respond, Recycle” phrase on 6 million publications it will mail this year to help encourage young readers to recycle. Nationally, more than 35 percent of mail is recycled now.

Each year, the Postal Service purchases more than \$200 million in products containing recycled content.

Many of the containers that hold and move mail in the system are made from recycled materials, as are stamped envelopes, postcards, stamp booklet covers – even the adhesive used in postage stamps is biodegradable. And the Postal Service is the only shipping company in the country to earn Cradle to Cradle™ certification for all Priority Mail and Express Mail packages and envelopes based on the environmental attributes of the materials used in the packaging.

A complete list of participating post offices can be found at ***Earth911.com***, using the word “mail” in the search engine. The list is sorted by ZIP Code.

More information on green initiatives and consumer products can be found at ***usps.com/green***.

An Audio News Release and fact sheet are available for this press release. Please visit the newsroom on ***usps.com*** or contact joanne.m.veto@usps.gov for copies.

#

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.

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.