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White House Honors Postal Service With Environmental Award *Agency 'Closing the Circle' With Green Purchasing*

WASHINGTON — The White House honored the U.S. Postal Service today for environmental stewardship with a 2009 Closing the Circle Award for its national Green Purchasing Program. This award brings to 40 the number of White House Closing the Circle Awards the Postal Service has won since the program's inception in 1995.

A key strategy of the Postal Service's Supply Management organization, the Green Purchasing Program incorporates evaluation of "environmentally preferable" products into purchasing decisions—along with price, quality and delivery standards. Examples include those products made of recycled content or renewable resources, eco-label certified (i.e., Green Seal and Ecologo), Energy Star and EPEAT registered electronics, water-conserving products and products free of targeted hazardous chemicals. (Energy Star is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy, designed to reduce energy costs and protect the environment through energy efficient products and practices. EPEAT is a program of the Green Electronics Council to help purchasers evaluate, compare and select electronic products based on their environmental attributes.)

The Postal Service Green Purchasing Program also includes a Supplier Sustainability Excellence Award, which was presented for the first time in May to a Postal Service supplier.

"Our green purchasing initiatives help conserve natural resources, protect the environment and provide a safer workplace for our employees," said Susan M. Brownell, vice president, Supply Management. "They also support our ever-improving sustainable business practices and are fiscally prudent."

Across the organization, from Supply Management to Facilities to Delivery, the Postal Service is integrating sound environmental business practices into day-to-day operations. In FY 2008, the Postal Service spent over \$88 million in the acquisition of environmentally preferable products, including remanufactured automobile parts, retreaded tires, recycled content paper products, custodial products and Cradle to Cradle-certified shipping boxes and envelopes. (Cradle to Cradle is an environmental certification by McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry, awarded to Priority Mail and Express Mail packaging and envelopes produced by Bell that have met 39 criteria for human and environmental health characteristics, including recyclability and

manufacturing attributes.)

The Postal Service also received honorable mention for its Lead-Free Wheel Weight Program. This program has the potential to prevent 17 tons of lead from entering the environment by outfitting Postal Service vehicles across the country with lead-free wheel weights.

Fifteen winners and 13 honorable mentions were selected from 200 nominations in the areas of environmental management systems, pollution prevention, recycling, green product purchasing, alternative fuels, electronics stewardship and sustainable buildings. The awards ceremony was held in the Natcher Auditorium at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Md.

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An independent federal agency, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation, 149 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes, six days a week. It has 34,000 retail locations and relies on the sale of postage, products and services, not tax dollars, to pay for operating expenses. Named the Most Trusted Government Agency five consecutive years by the Ponemon Institute, the Postal Service has annual revenue of \$75 billion and delivers nearly half the world's mail.