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Thousands of Postal Service Drivers Pass 1 Million Accident-Free Miles

'Million Mile Drivers' Offer Labor Day Weekend Safe Driving Tips

WASHINGTON — Americans hitting the road this Labor Day weekend should consider some advice from the U.S. Postal Service. According to the National Safety Council, nearly 5,900 postal employees have achieved a unique distinction most of us never approach in a lifetime — driving more than 1 million, accident-free miles.

No other business comes close.

The nation's 34,000 Post Offices are linked by 221,000 vehicles — the world's largest civilian fleet. As one of America's last vestiges to make house calls, 340,000 letter carriers and truck drivers log more than 1.2 billion miles annually when delivering to America's 140 million addresses.

Since 2005, when records were established, 5,858 Postal professionals have each driven more than a million miles without a single accident. Reaching this pinnacle requires 30 years of service and a safe attitude.

How do they do it?

"We place the safety of our employees as our top priority," said Deborah Giannoni-Jackson, vice president, Employee Resource Management. "And we credit our comprehensive safe driver training program as being second to none."

Driving for the Postal Service is a privilege that requires all drivers to demonstrate safe driving practices throughout their careers.

Behind-the-wheel job candidates undergo a rigorous screening, training and testing process to earn credentials to operate a right-hand drive postal vehicle.

After a review of state driving records, candidates undergo a thorough medical examination and an extensive interview process. Potential drivers also must pass road tests in their own passenger vehicles before taking eight hours of classroom training to pass a computer based exam. If they pass these hurdles, defensive driver training and a special skills course for hands-on behind-the-wheel training follow.

The skills course acclimates candidates to driving right-hand drive postal vehicles under various conditions on an "off-road" course that simulates street conditions. When completed, driving instructors accompany them for a 45-minute street drive followed by a final exam in a postal right-hand-drive vehicle.

Brainard, NE, Rural Carrier Dwayne "Oley" Raskey should know. He's one of the few who have been awarded a 2 million mile safe driving award. Raskey has been delivering mail for 52 years and has yet to have an accident or call in sick. He was the recipient of the prestigious 2009 Joseph M. Kaplan USPS National Safe Driver of the Year Award presented by the National Safety Council.

According to Raskey the keys to driving safely include being observant and driving to match conditions.

"If it's muddy or snowy you've got to slow down," cautioned Raskey, who has been working for the Postal Service since the Eisenhower administration. He navigates his daily 96-mile route almost exclusively on gravel roads.

Raskey also offered these tips:

- Drive defensively — expect the unexpected.
- Maintain a distance of one car length for every 10 m.p.h. between you and the car in front of you.
- Keep your options open — have a "what do I do if I'm cut off" strategy.
- Turn off mobile devices when driving — no cell phones or texting.

He also credits his longevity to staying active, dancing the polka and healthy eating.

Information on the National Safety Council's Safe Driver Program is located at www.nsc.org/usps. Questions can be directed to National Safety Council Customer Relations at 1-800-621-7619 or uspsawards@nsc.org.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

Please Note: For broadcast quality video and audio, photo stills and other media resources, visit the USPS Newsroom at www.usps.com/news.

A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation, 150 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes. The Postal Service receives no direct support from taxpayers. With 36,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, the Postal Service relies on the sale of postage, products and services to pay for operating expenses. Named the Most Trusted Government Agency five consecutive years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute, the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$68 billion and delivers nearly half the world's mail. If it were a private sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 28th in the 2009 Fortune 500.