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Contact: Patricia Licata
202.268.2783
patricia.licata@usps.gov
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U.S. Postal Service Encourages Voters to Mail Early *Recommended mailing dates for overseas military members fast approaching*

ANR/Soundbites: <http://multivu.prnewswire.com/broadcast/55519/press.html>

WASHINGTON — With more than 25 million ballots expected to be mailed this fall, the U.S. Postal Service is encouraging voters to mail early this election season.

To ensure the timely delivery of mailed ballots, voters in the contiguous United States are asked to mail completed absentee ballots at least three days before the Nov. 6 date of the federal general election — or Nov. 3. Ballots mailed from the contiguous states to Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands and vice versa must be mailed at least five days prior to the election date — or Nov. 1. Voters should also consider the time of day when dropping their vote in a collection box to be sure it's not past the pick-up time for the particular collection box.

Americans overseas, including service members of the U.S. Armed Services, should plan on mailing ballots according to the mailing schedule at www.usps.com/gov-services/gov-services.htm, or by contacting a local Army Post Office/Fleet Post Office (APO/FPO) or American embassy, for guidance in determining the actual cut-off date specific to the overseas location.

"Mail is an increasingly important part of U.S. elections, and we are confident in our ability to provide timely delivery of election mail," said Megan Brennan, chief operating officer. "All American voters living overseas, whether civilian or military, have the opportunity to mail their completed ballots back home free of charge using the APO/FPO or by hand-delivering their ballots to the nearest American embassy or consulate."

The Postal Service plays no role in how elections are carried out in the United States. A nonpartisan Elections Officials Mailing Resources site is available at www.usps.com/electionmail to inform election officials about Postal Service mailing options for election and political mail. Postal Service employees with expertise in designing election mail pieces long have been providing reliable, trusted guidance to election officials across the country. The Postal Service works with election officials and secretaries of states to ensure election mail meets standards for efficient processing and timely delivery.

Tips for voters using mail ballots:

- Visit state websites to ascertain election office locations and Vote by Mail rules.
- Check with the local election office for rules governing mail ballots.
- Place completed ballots inside their window envelopes correctly.
- Ensure proper postage and stamp placement on upper right-hand corner of envelope.

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

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Note: For broadcast quality video and audio, photo stills and other media resources, visit the USPS Newsroom at <http://about.usps.com/news/welcome.htm>.

For reporters interested in speaking with a regional Postal Service public relations professional, go to <http://about.usps.com/news/media-contacts/usps-local-media-contacts.pdf>.

A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation – 151 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes. The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. With 32,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, USPS.cc the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$65 billion and delivers nearly 40 percent of the world's mail. If it were a private sector company U.S. Postal Service would rank 35th in the 2011 Fortune 500. In 2011, Oxford Strategic Consulting ranked the U.S. Postal Service number one in overall service performance of the posts in the top 20 wealthiest nations in the world. *Black Enterprise* and *Hispanic Business* magazines ranked the Postal Service as a leader in workforce diversity. The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency for six years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.

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