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Trust: It's in the Mail

U.S. Postal Service Named 'Most Trusted Government Agency'

WASHINGTON — When it comes to safeguarding personal information, Americans continue to trust the U.S. Postal Service above all other government agencies. For the sixth consecutive year, the Postal Service has been named the “Most Trusted Government Agency” by the premier privacy trust study in America.

More than 87 percent of the 9,000 Americans surveyed by the Ponemon Institute in its *2010 Privacy Trust Study of the United States Government* ranked the Postal Service first among 75 federal government agencies. The results show that Americans view the Postal Service as the government agency that is best able to keep their information safe and secure. The average score among federal agencies included in the survey was 38 percent, down from 50 percent last year, with an increasing concern among Americans about the government's surveillance in their personal lives.

The Postal Service has held the top spot since the first privacy trust survey of the United States Government was completed in 2004. In addition, the Postal Service has consistently improved its privacy trust score during this time from 78 percent to the current rating of 87 percent.

“When you visit every door every day, trust is critical,” said Delores Killette, USPS Consumer Advocate and vice president. “It is the cornerstone of our mission to deliver reliable and affordable mail service to every American, as well as a great source of pride for postal employees across the country.”

The Postal Service handles 40 percent of the world's card and letter volume and delivers more mail to more addresses in a larger geographical area than any other post in the world. Despite the vast size of the Postal Service's network and scope of operations, many Americans know their letter carriers by name and see them as welcomed and trusted members of the local community, Killette said.

“We have a 230-year tradition of securing the mail and protecting our customers' personal information,” said Killette. “This survey clearly demonstrates that Americans continue to trust and depend on the Postal Service to protect their privacy.”

The survey asked Americans about their beliefs about U.S. government organizations that are known to collect and use information about the public. The survey included questions about Americans' belief that the federal government takes appropriate steps to safeguard personal information and about the government's commitment to protecting the privacy rights of its citizens.

“While overall trust in the government declined this year, trust in the U.S. Postal Service remains at an all-time high,” said Larry Ponemon, chairman and founder of the Ponemon Institute. “By offering consumers a sense of security that their privacy is protected and limiting the amount of personal data that is collected, government agencies like the Postal Service are able to strengthen the public's trust.”

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

An Audio News Release on this topic is available in the USPS Newsroom: www.usps.com/news.

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Copies of the *2010 Privacy Trust Study of the United States Government* are available by contacting the Ponemon Institute at www.ponemon.org.

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 six 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.