



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Dec. 1, 2011

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Release No. 11-131

U.S. Postal Service Delivers Children's Holiday Dreams Through Letters to Santa Program

NEW YORK – What do the U.S. Postal Service and Santa Claus have in common? Neither rain nor snow nor heat nor gloom of night will keep them from delivering dreams this holiday season. Today marks the start of the Postal Service's annual "Letters to Santa" program, a campaign that's helped fulfill the holiday wishes of children and their families for nearly a century.

"Letters to Santa" is an annual letter-writing program through which members of the public and charitable organizations respond to children's letters addressed to Santa Claus, the North Pole and other seasonal characters. To announce that the letter adoption period has begun, a ceremony was held today at New York City's Operation Santa command center at the iconic James A. Farley building with a special appearance by Santa Claus.

"We are delighted to once again kick off the holiday mailing season with the start of our annual 'Letters to Santa program'," said Postmaster General Patrick R. Donahoe. "The Postal Service is gearing up for a huge mail delivery to the North Pole to help Santa and his elves get ready for the big day."

The Postal Service expects to deliver more than 16.5 billion cards, letters and packages between now and New Years Eve. This year, a postmark of Santa in his sleigh being pulled by six reindeer will appear in the upper right-hand corner of holiday cards and letters.

"While Santa's been making wishes come true a bit longer than the Postal Service, for more than two centuries he's relied almost exclusively on postal employees to bring him letters from girls and boys around the country and to help him deliver their presents," Donahoe said. "For nearly 100 years, the 'Letters to Santa' program has made dreams come true for those in need. This is a time to celebrate how postal employees, charitable organizations, and businesses have made a difference in the lives of children coast to coast."

To learn more about the USPS "Letter to Santa" program or to view a list of participating Post Offices, visit usps.com/2011holidaynews

Visit USPS on Facebook at www.facebook.com/usps to learn how USPS can help simplify your holiday shipping needs.

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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Please 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 on this issue, please 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, 150 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.com, 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, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 29th in the 2010 Fortune 500. *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 six consecutive years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.