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U.S. Postal Service Forecasts Record Holiday Shipping Surge *Postmaster General Predicts Nearly 20 Percent Jump in Shipping Volume*

WASHINGTON — 'Tis the season, and for the 237th year the U.S. Postal Service is ready for **The Best Holiday Ever!** with 365 million packages expected to be delivered this holiday season — a 20 percent increase over 2011.

The Postal Service projects the record-breaking increase in its competitive package business due to consumers' growing fondness for shopping online. In total, nearly 18 billion cards, letters and packages will be delivered between Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve.

"This is one of the most exciting and busiest times of the year for the Postal Service, whether you're sending a holiday card to Kentucky or military care package to Afghanistan, our employees do what it takes to process and deliver every single one," said Patrick Donahoe, Postmaster General and chief executive officer.

Today, Donahoe and Nagisa Manabe, chief marketing officer and executive vice president, announced the mailing and shipping forecasts for the 2012 holiday season during the holiday rush kick-off event in Washington D.C.

The busiest mailing day for holiday cards/packages is Monday, Dec. 17, when more than 655 million pieces of mail are expected to be processed — compared to 538 on an average day. The busiest delivery day for letters will be Wednesday, Dec. 19 and the busiest day for packages will be Thursday, Dec. 20.

To help gear up for the holiday rush and record increase in package volume, postal staff at the National Operations Center report on Dec. 4 for around the clock duty to help navigate mail movement around the world — including 30 million pounds of military mail to be delivered to men and women serving the nation overseas.

Largest Door-to-Door Consumer Mailing Campaign

By week's end, the Postal Service will lead its largest direct mail effort ever — reaching nearly 140 million residences in America.

"We are excited to bring the Postal Service into every home across the country," said Manabe. "With a QR code that can be scanned to access up-to-date information, this mailing is sure to make holiday shipping and mailing simpler than ever before and help consumers manage this busy time of year."

The mailing also includes information about usps.com/cheer, a new dedicated holiday website. At usps.com/cheer, customers can print shipping labels, order free Priority Mail boxes, purchase postage and request a free package pickup — all with the touch of a finger. And for most packages, consumers can enter label numbers at usps.com and check delivery status with the Track and Confirm tool.

With more than one million visitors a day to usps.com, between Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve, and nearly 400,000 customers expected to print shipping labels using Click-N-Ship on Monday, Dec. 19, the Postal Service is sure to be the best shipping deal in Anytown, USA. Plus, the Postal Store on usps.com gives holiday shoppers ideas and tons of holiday supplies to celebrate the holidays — here and around the world.

Beat the Rush — Mail Early

To help customers beat the rush and know the all-important mailing and shipping deadlines, Donahoe stressed that mailing early is key and advised customers to take note of the following dates:

MAIL-BY-DATES

- **Nov. 14** APO/FPO Parcel Post Military Deadline
- **Dec. 3** Priority Mail International
- **Dec. 10** Priority Mail Military
- **Dec. 11** Express Mail International
- **Dec. 14** Parcel Post
- **Dec. 17** Global Express Guaranteed
- **Dec. 20** First-Class Mail
- **Dec. 21** Priority Mail
- **Dec. 22** Express Mail

Simple Tips for Holiday Mailing and Shipping

Given the busy season ahead, here are a few simple tips sure to help customers avoid those holiday hassles and keep the season merry.

- **Confirm addresses.** Print addresses clearly and in all CAPS and be sure to include all address elements — apartment numbers, suite numbers and directional information for streets. For example: 123 S Main St. or 12456 Elm St. N. Include both “to” and “from” information on packages — and only on one side. Never guess a ZIP Code. Visit usps.com to find all ZIP codes.
- **Choose the Right Box.** Select a box that is strong enough to protect the contents. Leave space for cushioning inside. Do not reuse mailing boxes — they weaken in the shipping process. Customers can purchase ReadyPost boxes at a local Post Office or at the Postal Store on usps.com. Express Mail and Priority Mail boxes, envelopes and tubes are free.
- **Pack Delicately.** Cushion contents with shredded or rolled newspaper, bubble wrap or foam peanuts. Plain air-popped popcorn also is good for cushioning — it's inexpensive and environmentally friendly. Pack contents tightly to avoid shifting during transit. Always use tape that is designed for shipping, such as pressure-sensitive tape, nylon-reinforced craft paper tape or glass-reinforced pressure-sensitive tape. Do not use wrapping paper, string, masking tape, duct tape or cellophane tape.

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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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.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 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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