

POSTAL NEWS

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1. Postal Service to Offer Competitive Prices for Express Mail, Priority Mail
-- Graphic Arts Online, 3/12/2008

WASHINGTON, DC—For the first time ever, the U.S. Postal Service is offering volume related or other price incentives for Express Mail, Priority Mail and other shipping services, effective May 12. These incentives are now possible as a result from a change in federal law*, enabling the Postal Service to better compete in the shipping market.

Postal Service shipping products are currently priced by a “one price fits all” approach — customers pay the same price per piece regardless of the number of packages sent or the method of payment. Beginning May 12, customers will be able to take advantage of commercial volume pricing, minimum volume rebates, online price breaks and other pricing incentives. For example:

Express Mail, premium overnight delivery, is switching to an industry standard, zone-based pricing system, resulting in lower prices for closer destinations. Customers will enjoy a 3 percent price reduction by purchasing Express Mail online or through corporate accounts. Up to an additional 7 percent price reduction is available for those who meet quarterly volume minimums.

Priority Mail, expedited delivery at economical prices, will be available at an average 3.5 percent savings to customers who use electronic postage or meet other requirements.

Parcel Select, the Postal Service “last mile” advantage of delivery to every door, will feature pricing and volume incentives for large- and medium-sized shippers.

Parcel Return Service, an easy and convenient way for customers to return items to businesses, will move entirely to a weight-based pricing system, resulting in significant price reductions for lighter packages.

“These innovative published pricing incentives will make our products more attractive to all shippers, especially small businesses,” said Postmaster General John Potter. “We’re pricing our products to sell in today’s competitive shipping market. In the near future, the Postal Service plans to explore contract pricing for larger customers similar to others in the market.”

The new prices are available at usps.com/prices.

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2. Decision On Opening Indian Postal Bank To Be Taken Soon – Shakeel Ahmad

24 Mar 2008

by Ravinder MakhaikShare This · Print this article · Post a commentPublished in: Business, General, NewsShimla: With the Indian postal services already offering deposit and savings schemes, the government is likely to soon float an Indian Postal Bank as the matter is awaiting approval of the finance ministry, Shakeel Ahmad, minister of state for communication and information technology, stated here today.

He said that the matter of opening the Indian Postal Bank was under consideration of the government and had been put before the finance ministry. “A final decision would soon be taken,” he said. It would help to extend banking services into many rural areas, he added.

The government would be spending Rs 6,000 crore for computerizing the whole postal network. “Despite a drop in mail services, the world’s largest postal service was still effectively serving 72 percent of the country’s population,” said Ahmad.

Looking to add other services, many post offices had started offering railway booking facilities in the country. Local tie-ups for making available low airline tickets through post offices was also being explored and had already been started in Karnataka state, the minister informed.

He said that as part of e-governance, the government was spending Rs 6,000 crore for setting up 1 lakh community service centres, one for each panchayat in the country by 2009.

Talking about expansions plans of BSNL, he said only recently tenders for additional 4.5 crore new lines had been floated. He added that 2G spectrum had been allotted and 3G spectrums would be soon handed out through an open auction system.

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3. Russian Postal Service Wears Red Hat

24 March 2008 by Franz Groter - © Hellmail.co.uk

Russian Post and American company Red Hat signed the Protocol of intentions on IT development based on open freeware earlier this month. Andrey Pogodin, Deputy Director General of FSUE Russian Post and Jim Whitehurst, President of Red Hat signed the document within the framework of meeting. The parties agreed to join efforts to implement operating system Linux and other software products with open code in Russian Post's IT-structure.

Transfer to freeware products helps to save immense sum of money the enterprise presently spends on software for wide Russian Post's network. Software products with open code considerably less expensive than commercial programs as the company doesn't purchase any license. In case of difficulties company can sign contract on maintenance with the representative of company-developer. "Company using software with open code doesn't pay for the software product itself. Maintenance work is paid only. So signing of such contract is 2-3 times lower than purchasing of license," comments Andrey Pogodin.

Open software is to be implemented this year. Presently the developers of special programs used by Russian Post have task to adapt them for work on the base of operating system Linux. Thus, postal operators won't find any changes difficult as they will use the same applications with user interface. Russian Post's IT-specialists will pass special training.

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4. Postal Services Strengthened In Liberia

24 March 2008 by Mark White - © Hellmail.co.uk

An international effort is underway to help restore postal services in Liberia which had been virtually destroyed by civil war.

Amongst those lending support has been Swiss Post which donated six mobile post offices in 2007 and Deutsche Post, which donated 10,000 EUR to help equip newly reopened offices.

Even Korea donated some 40,000 CHF from its Quality of Service Fund to help finance the purchase of vehicles, scales and stamp cancellation equipment. The US recently despatched (by US Navy ship), 35 pallets of Post Office boxes and postal equipment.

The Inter-Governmental Philatelic Corporation printed Liberia's first post-war stamps last year, and donated 12 vehicles. Nigeria has been provided training to a number of postal staff.

Liberia has seen 14 years of civil war but since August 2007, it's postal service is starting to move once more with international aid. The postal service is seen as a key to rebuilding the country's infrastructure. Even rural areas will see 150 offices in 14 counties, compared to just 34 before the war started.

Jackson E. DOE, Liberia's minister for posts and telecommunications and postmaster general said: "The renovation and construction of post offices throughout the nation is part of our decentralization plan to take the postal services to our fellow Liberians in rural Liberia. It is their right, not privilege. They have long been denied such a right because of the protracted years of civil conflicts that led to living under harsh economic conditions. Decentralizing postal services is in response to the interim poverty reduction strategies programme."

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5. Indian Postal Bank awaits nod

March 24th, 2008 - 9:06 pm ICT by admin

Shimla, March 24 (IANS) The telecom department is set to enter the banking sector by opening the Indian Postal Bank, which is awaiting the clearance of the finance ministry. "The matter is currently before the finance ministry and as soon as we get permission the Indian Postal Bank will be set up," Shakeel Ahmad, minister of state for communications, said here Monday.

Speaking about the expansion of services in Himachal Pradesh, he said: "In spite of a difficult and snow-bound terrain, coverage of villages with telecom services is one of the highest in the country here."

“The number of BSNL (Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd) mobile customers has shot up to 540,000 with 508 BTS mobile towers. There are also 4,14,92 landline connections in the state,” Ahmad.

“A year ago, broadband was available on demand from 29 stations, today it is available at 119 BSNL stations. By the end of March next year, the plan is to add 64,000 broadband connections at 400 locations,” he said.

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6. I.D. Systems Receives \$5.4 Mln Worth Purchase Orders From United States Postal Service - Quick Facts

Monday, March 24, 2008; Posted: 09:34 AM

(RTTNews) - I.D. Systems, Inc. (IDSY | news | PowerRating | PR Charts) announced that it has received \$5.4 million worth purchase orders from the United States Postal Service to deploy I.D. Systems' Wireless Asset Net industrial vehicle management system at 16 additional mail distribution facilities.

Fulfillment of these orders will increase the number of United States Postal Service facilities deploying the Wireless Asset Net system to 96.

The Wireless Asset Net consists of intelligent wireless devices installed on powered industrial vehicles and client-server software for access control, utilization analysis, real-time location tracking, and many other functions.

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