

POSTAL NEWS

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- 1. Akerman Addresses Concerns of Postal Contractors Looking to Succeed Amidst a Challenging Purchasing Environment. May 21, 2009.**
- 2. Postal changes urged. May 21, 2009.**
- 3. Look for changes in postal pickup times. May 21, 2009.**

1. Akerman Addresses Concerns of Postal Contractors Looking to Succeed Amidst a Challenging Purchasing Environment

TYSONS CORNER, Va., May 21 /PRNewswire/ -- Facing multi-billion dollar losses and large declines in mail volume, the U.S. Postal Service has ratcheted up its efforts to wring additional cost savings from its suppliers. These efforts will only intensify through the rest of the year.

To help postal contractors operate successfully within this stressful environment, Akerman Senterfitt's Government Contracts group will host a one-day seminar in McLean, VA titled, Doing Business with the U.S. Postal Service. This seminar will provide essential information for all postal contractors and subcontractors.

"Now more than ever, suppliers need to understand the Postal Service's unique purchasing environment, which differs vastly from that of other federal agencies and commercial entities," said David P. Hendel, the Akerman shareholder who co-presents the seminar. "With the many changes that have occurred over the past several years, both seasoned professionals and new postal contractors will learn how these changes can impact their business relations with this agency."

"Since bedrock federal procurement rules such as the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and Competition in Contracting Act (CICA) do not apply to the Postal Service, the Postal Service has adopted its own special purchasing policies," said Stephen B. Hurlbut, Office Managing Shareholder for Akerman's Tysons Corner office and co-presenter of the seminar. "Contractors need to know how these rules affect their contracting opportunities."

Next Thursday, Hendel and Hurlbut, both former attorneys for the U.S. Postal Service in the Office of Contracts and Property Law, will discuss a range of critical issues including:

Key background information on the Postal Service

Up-to-date financial data on the USPS revenue, expenses, and cost-cutting efforts

Postal Culture Pointers -- 23 Dos and Don'ts that every contractor must know

The new purchasing rules and policies that now apply to the Postal Service and how contractors are impacted by them

The 10 most common contract administration problems -- and how to prevent them from happening to you
How to prepare, present, and resolve requests for equitable adjustment and claims for additional costs

The seminar will take place at The Ritz-Carlton in McLean, VA from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 28th.

Akerman's Government Contracts practice covers the full breadth of issues encountered in federal and state procurement. The group has experience with virtually every federal civilian and defense agency, and they have a specialty in Postal Contracting. The Government Contracts practice group assists clients in litigation and counseling on a wide range of matters, from contract formation to contract termination, False Claims Act issues, bid protests, foreign ownership and control, suspension and debarment, and related statutory concerns.

To register for Akerman's upcoming seminar in Tysons Corner, please visit www.akerman.com/events.

About Akerman Senterfitt

Akerman is ranked among the top 100 law firms in the United States by The National Law Journal NLJ 250 (2008) in number of lawyers and is one of the largest firms in Florida. With more than 500 lawyers and governmental affairs professionals, the firm serves clients in major business centers throughout the United States, including Miami, New York, Washington D.C. and Los Angeles. For additional information, please visit the firm's Web site at www.akerman.com.

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2. Postal changes urged

By KITTY CAPARELLA
Philadelphia Daily News

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The Postal Service's Office of Inspector General, which investigated alleged mismanagement at Philadelphia mail facilities, identified several factors that led to problems at its Southwest Philadelphia plant.

The OIG recommended that acting district manager James J. Gallagher enact corrective actions to address the concerns by Sept. 30. They include:

- * Requiring managers to verify daily reports of delayed mail.
- * Meeting regularly with employees to identify and address their concerns.
- * Verifying that only mail that meets certain requirements is destroyed.
- * Ensuring that mail is delivered timely to carrier stations, and from letter carriers to customers on their routes.
- * Modifying processing equipment to reduce damage to packages, and maintain and staff the equipment properly.
- * Expediting mail flow throughout the Lindbergh Boulevard processing-and-delivery facility.
- * Improving communications and contingency planning when mail is directed to other facilities.
- * Contacting major mailers to improve labeling and packaging.
- * Explaining operational issues better to employees.
 - Evaluating staffing at each mail-processing operation and delivery unit. *

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3. Look for changes in postal pickup times

By NED B. HUNTER
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• May 21, 2009

Anna Griffith went to drop her mail in the U.S. Postal Service's North Parkway drop box the other day when she realized the pickup time had been changed.

The co-owner of Jackson Restaurant Supply, Griffith would drop her mail in the blue box on her way home, confident the 4 p.m. pickup would get her payments to their destination on time.

But the new pickup time of 1 p.m. has changed the way Griffith does business.

"I can't get the mail ready by 1 p.m. when I am working off the mail I receive," Griffith said, "which does not come until 12 to 1 p.m."

Pickup times at some Jackson outdoor drop boxes are now earlier to help lower government fuel costs and process the day's mail faster, said Don Cartwright, Jackson postmaster.

"It allows the carrier to pick that box up during the normal process of delivering mail," he said, "and we don't have to send a carrier back to pick up that box later."

While area mail volumes have fallen in the past two years, Cartwright said no Jackson routes have been eliminated. The postal service currently has just over 200 employees working 41 city routes and 23 rural routes in Jackson.

Griffith is pleased the post office is trying to be more "green" by conserving fuel, but she wasn't sure changing the pickup time on the box would work. She now travels an additional seven miles round trip from her work on the U.S. 45 Bypass to the downtown post office to drop off her mail.

"If it were just me, it would be no big deal," Griffith said, "but there are a lot of businesses around there, (and) one little cart saving fuel times a lot of business people - well, there is a big difference."

Pickup times on blue postal street boxes range from early morning to 4 p.m.

Beth Barnett, spokeswoman for the U.S. Postal Service in Memphis, said it isn't uncommon for pickup times to be changed. She said the postal service tries to determine the pickup times for street-side boxes by the needs of the surrounding area.

"We try to match collection times with need," she said, "so if it is in a residential area, we are trying to gear the times to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. for mixed-use areas and later for business areas."

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