

## USPS Needs Freedom or More Federal Funding

Snail mail, while not as popular or crucial as it once was, nevertheless serves an important purpose.

Congress needs to take action to ensure the U.S. Postal Service can operate efficiently.

Yet, that's not happening as federal mail service is floundering as a quasi-governmental agency. It is expected to operate just like a private for-profit business while also having to follow various government regulations — and restrictions — imposed by Congress.

Given that, it's no wonder the Postal Service is doing a lousy job serving its customers.

The Postal Service inspector general issued a report noting the number of letters arriving late has increased by almost 50 percent since the start of the year. Inspector General Dave Williams issued an urgent alert in August recommending no further

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**When: September 24, 2015**

**Where: Ralston Arena**

**7300 Q Street**

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## The United States Postal Service: Up Close and Personal

by Dan Burke



I had the pleasure recently of interviewing Cindy Long, a BSN Representative for the United States Postal Service. Cindy was born in Omaha and attended Marian High School and UNO. She was in the Banking Industry in Minneapolis, MN prior to the USPS. Once with the USPS, she started in Mail Processing, worked all clerk positions at the West Omaha Station, carried mail, and drove a two ton truck prior to becoming a Business Service Network Representative. She has worked in Sales, Resource Management and OPS Support all on detail assignments. Besides volunteering and landscaping/gardening, she likes to hike the outdoors, play sports of all kinds and hang with her dog.

**How long have you been working for the US Postal Service?** 30 years

**How long have you been a Business Service Network (BSN) Representative?** Since 1998  
**What is the main purpose of the BSN?** The Main purpose of the BSN is to be a liaison between the larger mailers and the USPS to keep customers abreast of new USPS products and services they may utilize to grow their business. Notifying customers of changes in USPS policies and procedures/price changes and to assist them in implementing these. Assisting in resolving issues nationwide are a few of the main responsibilities of the BSN.

**What do you feel is the hardest part about your job?** Getting timely responses internally for customers. Schedules are hectic and not only are we operating 24 hours a day, but there are time differences that mean it is difficult to reach the individuals necessary to help resolve issues. Also, explaining to customers why the USPS has to cut or change services for customers.

**What BSN services are most requested by your customers?** It varies between customers and timing during the year, but recently it has been the utilization of the Business Customer Gateway and tracking of mail. The new package scans have been a big topic lately as well. We have added several new scans on packages and customers are asking what they mean.

**Which service or services do you feel are the most underutilized by customers?** Use of the Business Customer Gateway, electronic filing of statements and E-Service in Panorama, all of which I feel benefit the customer.

**Are there any facts about the BSN that you feel customers should know about but don't?** Absolutely! A very important survey is sent out by Headquarters, arbitrarily and confidentially, to customers who have used their BSN Rep. and had their issue closed. Your BSN Rep is graded on your response to that survey; on how they handled your issue, and how they treated you as a customer. We are constantly trying to improve the customer experience and want your honest feedback from that survey to be excellent. Central Plains District is often in the top percentage but we want our customers to be knowledgeable, informed and happy! If customers could take 5 minutes and thoughtfully fill it out, with comments, we can serve you better!

**Finally, what is a little known fact about you that might surprise your co-workers?** I am a table tennis champion among friends!

# GO!PCC 2015 Golf Outing Highlights



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closures of mail-sorting plants until service stabilizes.

The Washington Post reported first-class mail has gradually been traveling more slowly since the Postal Service started closing dozens of mail-sorting plants in 2012. In a cost-cutting move made in January, the Postal Service eliminated overnight delivery for local first-class letters that used to arrive the next day. This resulted in about half the mail traveling longer distances and requiring an extra day to reach its destination.

Members of Congress are now hearing from angry constituents. The House this spring passed a measure requiring USPS to return mail delivery standards to 2012 levels.

That's a political move that won't do much to speed up mail delivery or stop the financial bleeding that has prompted the dramatic cuts in services.

Lawmakers have authority over the Postal Service because it receives a tiny appropriation from taxpayers — 1 percent of its operations budget — that funds mail for the blind and overseas ballots.

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But this federal funding gives Congress control over the Postal Service. For example, the Postal Service must spend billions annually to pre-fund health costs for future retirees. This is not required of private businesses.

This leaves the USPS at a competitive disadvantage to private services that deliver mail and packages.

The restraints of being a quasi-governmental agency — not really private, not really public — are too much for the USPS to fulfill its financial obligation and deliver the mail on time.

Congress needs to take action to allow the Postal Service to operate more like a private-sector business, or provide the federal funding needed for it to operate efficiently.

Walla Walla Union Bulletin/  
WA/Sept. 1, 2015

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The *POST* is a publication of the Greater Omaha Postal Customer Council



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