

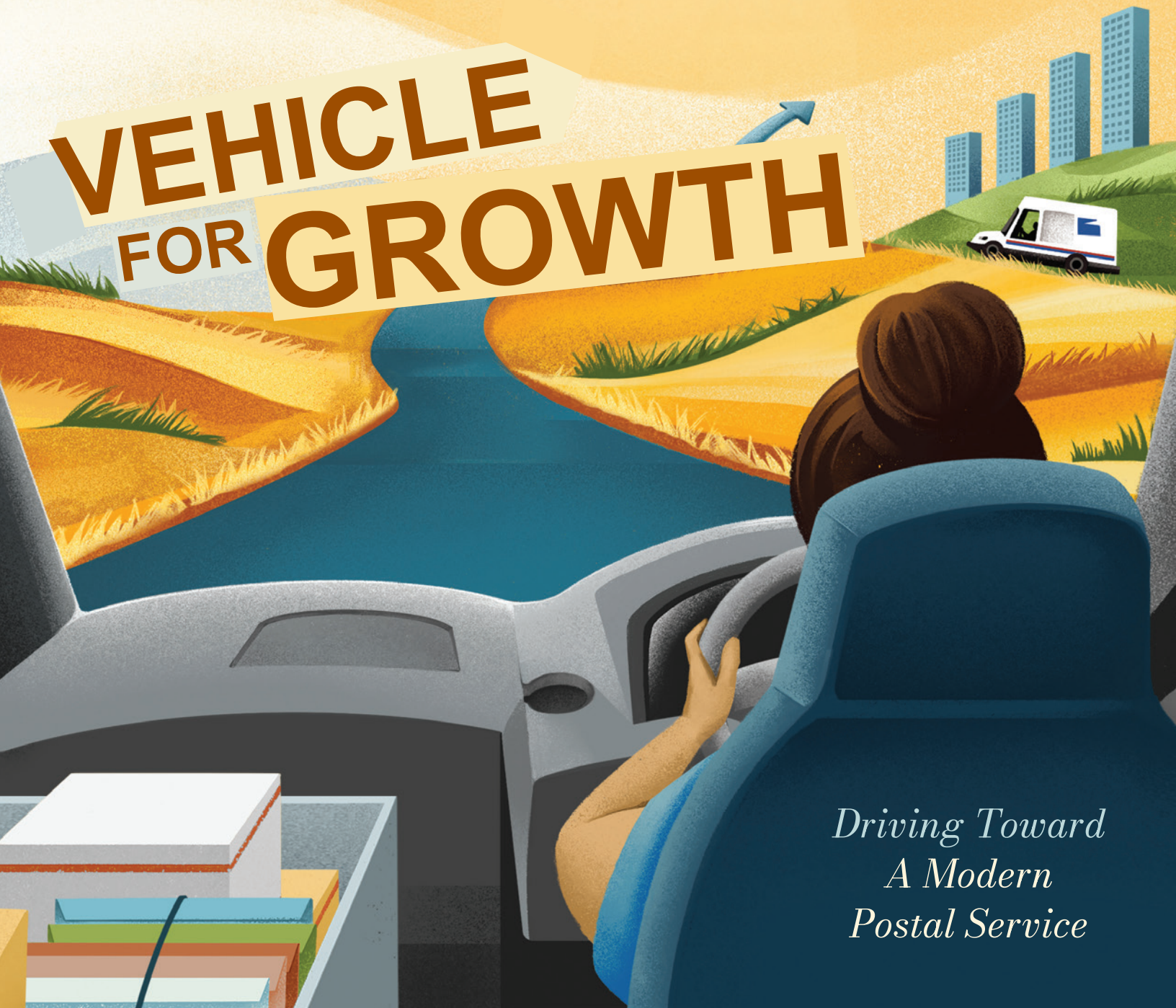
VOLUME 3 · ISSUE 3

# The Eagle

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY FOR EMPLOYEES  
OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

MAGAZINE

VEHICLE  
FOR GROWTH



*Driving Toward  
A Modern  
Postal Service*

# A Healthy Change



## Learn about the new Postal Service Health Benefits that take effect on Jan. 1, 2025.

The Postal Service Reform Act of 2022 created the new Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) Program for eligible employees, annuitants, and eligible family members. PSHB coverage will replace Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) plan coverage, and you'll have your first opportunity for PSHB plan selection during the open season benefits enrollment period in late 2024.

**Learn more now at [MyHR.usps.gov](https://myhr.usps.gov).**

Once signed on, go to the Pay & Benefits tab, select FEHB in the Benefits section, then select Postal Service Health Benefits in the FEHB Information section.

**Retirees can visit [KeepingPosted.org](https://keepingposted.org).**

Click on the PSHB Program graphic at the top of the page in the featured topics slides, or go to the Health Benefits tab.

**Get the latest updates on PSHB: Text [BENEFITS to 39369](tel:39369)**



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**Our new delivery vehicles will begin arriving in America's communities this summer and throughout the coming years. They are one of the most visible symbols of the Postal Service's transformation and modernization. Our current fleet of postal delivery vehicles includes many over 30 years old — reflecting a legacy of deferred investment. Our future fleet will by 2028 include at least 35,000 new purpose-built electric and more than 21,000 new commercial-off-the-shelf electric vehicles, as well as new purpose-built gas-powered ones. I'm pleased to say they will provide our carriers with a much-improved mobile workplace.**



While this issue of *The Eagle* magazine looks closely at the features and improvements in our purpose-built Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV), the focus of our cover article and our organization is on the role these vehicles will play in our growth strategy. With increased cargo space, the NGDV will enable us to expand our offerings, improve our competitiveness and better serve the nation's package delivery needs.

We also examine one of the great innovations of the Postal Service — our Informed Delivery offering — now used regularly by more than 60 million people to preview their incoming mail and packages. We look at new features and the many ways Informed Delivery strengthens the value of mail. In a related article, we highlight the rollout of USPS Smart Lockers, which provide a new, convenient, secure option for package retrieval — integrated with Informed Delivery.

This issue also provides perspective on the rich history of the Postal Service's influence on America's modes of transportation, which continues today as we build one of the nation's largest fleets of electric delivery vehicles.

With these and future topics, *The Eagle* magazine will capture our progress and provide context for the strategies and initiatives that are guiding us forward.

I hope you find this magazine useful and engaging.

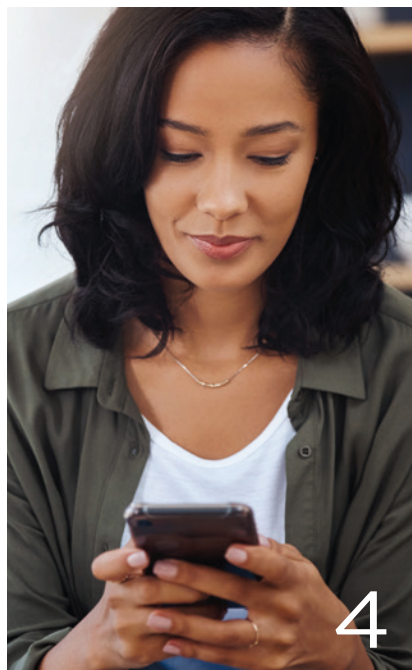
As always, thank you for the great work you do every day.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Louis DeJoy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Louis DeJoy**

Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer  
United States Postal Service

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*Know a postal employee who is making a difference through volunteer work or community service? Send Spotlight nominations to [The\\_Eagle@usps.gov](mailto:The_Eagle@usps.gov).*

# For the Love of Animals

This Postal Service employee opens her heart and her home to pets in need.

## JANA BELLER

Maintenance Support Clerk  
Oklahoma City

**Jana Beller, an Oklahoma City maintenance support clerk, has six cats and two dogs at home — and has fostered over 100 cats, including dozens of kittens.**

It reflects the problem animal shelters and rescues face — getting pets adopted out and keeping up with the number coming in.

Beller and two friends formed Good Dogma to help reduce pet overpopulation in their Oklahoma community, Midwest City. “Our main thing is to stop unwanted litters,” Beller said. The nonprofit provides residents of the area with free or discounted spay and neuter services for their pets.

To quickly reunite lost animals with their owners, Good Dogma also provides low-cost ID tags through its Tags for Wags campaign. “Our shelters are overcrowded, and when someone’s dog comes in as a stray, it takes up a space for an animal that really needs it,” Beller said. Microchips can be effective, but they’re useless unless they’re registered — and many people don’t realize they need to do that. As Beller noted, “A tag is an immediate reunification with the pet parent.”

Sometimes low-income residents surrender their pets out of desperation because they can’t afford the care. “We’ll always do our best to make sure that pet can stay in the home,” Beller said. By providing pet food, defraying veterinarian costs, repairing a fence — Good Dogma offers these pet owners the option of holding onto their animals.

**“These animals need nurturing.”**

Most shelters and rescues are severely understaffed and welcome volunteers. (Dog lovers, take note: There are canine companions-in-waiting that need to be walked every day.) Once or twice a week for nearly a decade, Beller would photograph or video the cats at Midwest City Animal Welfare and promote them to Facebook groups and rescue organizations across Oklahoma.

Foster families are urgently needed, and Beller is glad to help in this way. “It’s the difference between life and death in some facilities,” she said. “These animals need nurturing and a bridge from the shelter to a family. I love seeing them get adopted and into their forever homes — it’s the best feeling.”

Learn more about **Good Dogma** at [gooddogma.org](http://gooddogma.org).



# STAYING INFORMED

After nearly a decade, Informed Delivery has become a feature that over 60 million customers rely on.



Since its introduction in 2015, Informed Delivery has evolved into an invaluable tool for mailers and recipients alike.

“Informed Delivery continues to enhance the value of mail for our mailing partners,” said Armando Lopez, the Postal Service’s director of product technology innovation. “We’re improving the experience for existing customers and creating new features that attract new users.”

Which is exactly why Informed Delivery is an integral part of the Delivering for America plan’s key strategy for growth, innovation and continued relevance. It also shows, in action, how the Postal Service’s investment in modern technology solutions for its customers and employees is paying off.

## The benefit to customers

Users appreciate the added visibility of Informed Delivery, a free service from USPS. They like being able to track and manage what’s coming to their mailbox or PO Box.

Images of up to 10 letter-size mailpieces, as well as status updates on incoming and outbound USPS packages, can be viewed in a Daily

Digest email. The remaining mail images can be viewed at any time via the dashboard from a phone, computer or the USPS Mobile app, and are retained for seven days.

Customers can leave directions for the carrier, electronically sign eligible packages or schedule redelivery — including to USPS Smart Lockers.

For timely updates on mail delivery, eligible customers can opt to receive Mail Delivery Notification emails. Notice is typically sent within 30 minutes of when mail or packages have been delivered to the home address.

The majority of users are happy with Informed Delivery and are highly likely to endorse the feature. An impressive 93 percent of users would recommend Informed Delivery to friends, family or colleagues.

Informed Delivery started with a focus on mail and then expanded into package visibility. “Customers can now see packages arriving that day, or arriving soon — within three days,” said Fernando Mello, who has been the program manager for Informed Delivery since March 2020. “They can also see outbound packages. If a customer uses Click-N-Ship to create a label, tracking information on that

label can be included in the Daily Digest email.” The dashboard retains package information for 15 days after delivery.

This is another illustration of how Delivering for America investments in tracking infrastructure — which will make Informed Delivery even more powerful — continue to strengthen the value of mail. Making the same data easily and quickly available across all USPS systems gives customers an integrated view of mail and packages from start to finish.

## A powerful tool

With over 60 million users, Informed Delivery is a powerful digital marketing tool.

The average Informed Delivery Daily Digest email open rate is 63.9 percent — approximately three times

**STATE FARM® INSURANCE** is using Informed Delivery to — like a good neighbor — offer a helping hand. As part of its Drive Safe & Save™ program, customers are mailed a beacon that goes in their car and relays driving information. The Informed Delivery notification links to a video that explains activation.

higher than industry standards. In addition, users spend more time on the Informed Delivery dashboard — an average of 1 minute, 18 seconds, compared with 47 seconds across other industry sites.

“And, with Informed Delivery, business customers have the opportunity for double views of their mailing — once in the digital app, and again in real-world mail delivery,” Lopez noted.

### A significant opportunity

Informed Delivery marketing campaigns provide a significant opportunity for brands to engage customers.

The standard Informed Delivery notification includes a grayscale image of the address side of the mailpiece. Mailers can add clickable color content, known as a ride-along image, that redirects users to a website or other related digital asset. Businesses can link to information such as follow-up purchase offers, installation instructions and return guidance.

Through a web portal, businesses can see how customers are interacting with their campaigns, providing useful information on email opens and click-throughs on ride-along content. They can also track the number of mailpieces sent, dates that mailpieces were processed for delivery and ZIP Codes of Informed Delivery households. “The insights gained from this data can be used to optimize marketing spend,” Lopez said.

Through the integration of physical mail and digital marketing, 5.8 billion impressions were generated in completed interactive campaigns in the 2023 calendar year.

In 2023, Informed Delivery enrollment was opened to small businesses with an eligible address, enabling them to see incoming mail and packages.

Small businesses can also benefit from the interactive campaign feature. Marketing campaign submission has been enhanced and simplified with these mailers in mind. USPS provides

customizable templates, so small businesses can create and submit campaigns without relying on an outside service provider.

As of December 2023, more than 30,000 small businesses recognized the value-add of Informed Delivery and enrolled in it.

### Untapped potential

Metrics show that Informed Delivery enrollment has reached 30 percent nationwide. The average year-over-year growth is 14 percent, so there is potential to reach millions more users.

And where are these people?

“On their smartphones,” Mello said.

“So, USPS is meeting customers where they are now, which is on mobile devices.”

Progress is underway on a native mobile app — meaning one that can be downloaded and installed on a mobile device. It would provide dynamic content, versus an embedded browser view on a dashboard. “For comparison, the Daily Digest email comes once a day, usually between 7 and 8 a.m. local time, and the customer needs to log into the Informed Delivery dashboard for updates,” Mello said. “An upgraded mobile app would provide near-real-time communication, and a user could customize it to receive notifications at a time of their choosing.”

Additionally, the upgraded mobile app would allow for personalization.



### CONTINUED GROWTH

The Informed Delivery user base has grown to **60.6 million active users** (+14% year over year).



### STRONG EMAIL OPEN RATE

The Daily Digest has consistently outpaced the industry average at **above 63%**.



### VALUABLE IMPRESSIONS

Informed Delivery campaigns have generated **over 5.8 billion impressions**.

For example, the customer could modify the interface and see packages first — “no more scrolling through an email full of content looking for a specific item,” Mello pointed out.

The Delivering for America plan calls for further upgrades to Informed Delivery to increase its use by subscribers, particularly a younger demographic. The Postal Service’s success depends on meeting consumer expectations — and in today’s world, that means a digital experience. Informed Delivery is a powerful tool linking physical mail to the digital realm — which enhances the value of mail and keeps it relevant.

“I like being able to see all mail I should be receiving when I am looking for a specific piece.”

— User testimonial



From its iconic nose to its rear safety camera, the U.S. Postal Service's new, American-made Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV) is an integral part of the organization's long-term growth strategy. With more than twice the cargo capacity of today's postal delivery vehicles, the

# VEHICLE FOR

**“Deploying the NGDV nationally throughout our delivery operations is a significant milestone in our ability to become a high-performing, financially and environmentally sustainable enterprise. This vehicle is the tool our carriers need to serve the American public today, tomorrow and far into the future.”**

— Louis DeJoy, Postmaster General



NGDV will help deliver more packages to more people at a lower cost. And when they start rolling down America's streets later this year, NGDVs will provide an attention-getting example of a modernizing USPS.



# GROWTH



**T**he NGDV epitomizes the investment strategy of the Delivering for America plan: correcting decades of underinvestment with best-in-class, purpose-built vehicles that will enhance the Postal Service's competitiveness. This new truck is a more efficient tool than the current Long Life Vehicle (LLV), which was created when letter delivery reigned supreme, and the NGDV's ability to deliver hundreds of packages to more customers every day means each trip will generate much more revenue than the LLV it replaces.

The NGDV provides a vastly improved, safer and more comfortable workplace for the tens of thousands of carriers who help the Postal Service serve 167 million addresses across America six and seven days a week. It also provides an enormous benefit in the form of cost reduction by removing the heavy burden of maintaining and operating an aging fleet of LLVs that have outlived their planned lifespan by more than 10 years on average.

### Intentionally greener

From the start, the modernization of the mail delivery fleet was a critical component of Delivering for America's environmental sustainability vision, with fuel efficiency and low emissions fundamental to the new vehicle's design. One of the winning attributes of the NGDV is the manufacturer's ability to install a traditional internal combustion engine (ICE) or a battery-electric powertrain on the same platform. This has allowed USPS, with the support of Congress, to ensure that at least 35,000 of the current order for 50,000 NGDVs — 70 percent of the total — will be battery-electric vehicles.

**“The NGDV’s ability to deliver larger volumes of mail and packages to more customers maximizes the efficiencies of our new processing and distribution network. The NGDV helps us to be more reliable, improve and expand our delivery operation and reduce the number of inefficient trips. That’s a win for everyone.”**

— **Ronnie Jarriel**, USPS Senior Vice President, Facilities and Fleet Management



## DRIVING TOWARD A

**More than twice the storage space of an LLV**

2x

**Large rear walk-in cargo door**

For easier loading and unloading



**Large sliding side cargo door and low step height**

For safe and ergonomic entrance and exit



**Automatic front and rear braking**



**Airbag**



**Large side window and adjustable seat**

For easy reach to a mailbox





# MODERN POSTAL SERVICE

**Adjustable cargo shelving**  
For optimal mail and package organization

**360-degree camera system**  
For a full view around the vehicle for safe operation

**Air conditioning**

**Blind spot warning**

**Over-size windshield and low front hood**  
For enhanced visibility of surroundings to maximize safety

**Adjustable mail tray**  
For ergonomic reach during curbside deliveries

**Automatic electronic parking brake**



**Front and rear bumper sensors**

**Forward collision warning system**  
For improved situational awareness

# AN ELECTRIFYING FUTURE

The Postal Service's \$9.6 billion fleet revitalization strategy extends far beyond the NGDV. With commitments to add more than 21,000 battery-electric commercial-off-the-shelf delivery vehicles between now and 2028 and 25,000 fuel-efficient internal combustion engine vehicles in the next two years, USPS is firmly at the front of the country's effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

This unprecedented effort to electrify much of the USPS delivery fleet will require an entirely new energy infrastructure, with tens of thousands of charging stations installed at sorting and delivery centers (S&DCs) nationwide.

The multiyear rollout of this charging infrastructure has already started, with the first 14,000 charging stations in production. Approximately 6,000 charging stations supporting over 11,000 BEVs are expected to be installed by the end of 2024 at approximately 130 S&DCs and at other facilities.

The first 14,000 charging stations can support up to 26,000 BEVs, taking approximately 8-10 hours to fully charge a vehicle.

## PURPOSE-BUILT FOR NETWORK TRANSFORMATION

The NGDV is a vital component of the Postal Service's transformation and modernization plan. The vehicles will vastly improve package delivery capability in every market, especially when integrated into the new network of sorting and delivery centers.

"S&DCs are a vital link in the new transportation, processing and delivery ecosystem at the heart of USPS modernization. By fulfilling the work of five to 10 delivery units, S&DCs can serve upward of 200,000 customers each day, and strategic locations provide quick and easy next-day and same-day delivery options for local businesses. The NGDV is the essential last-mile cog in that ecosystem," explained Ronnie Jarriel, USPS senior vice president, facilities and fleet management.

"With S&DCs receiving tens of thousands of packages daily from a regional processing and distribution center, they need a large, nimble fleet of delivery vehicles to get these packages to customers reliably and on time," Jarriel noted, adding that the NGDV — with its increased capacity, right-hand drive configuration, capacity to deliver a greater quantity of parcels and ability to serve more customers each trip — is tailor-made for this mission.

S&DCs will also be home to a sizable fleet of NGDVs, serve as a charging center for BEVs and provide secure parking for gas-powered vehicles, added Jarriel. "Direct control of these fleets at the local level allows the Postal Service to fine-tune its daily schedules to operate the nation's most efficient, effective and extensive last-mile delivery network," he said.

These BEVs, as they are known, are well suited to the Postal Service's mission. They are very effective at frequent stop-and-go driving, and the powertrain provides an immense amount of power to the vehicle, a real bonus when carrying heavy loads. BEVs also have fewer moving parts and use fewer fluids than vehicles powered by internal combustion, so there is less wear and tear and lower maintenance costs.

Frequent braking inherent with curbside delivery provides its own energy source, recharging the vehicle's battery through a process known as regenerative braking. These batteries, which are expected to last at least 10 years on the road, can also be used to store energy when they have passed their useful service life, and their precious materials can be rotated back into the manufacturing process.

### Leading the way

The Postal Service's commitment to BEVs is pioneering. It is one of the largest single fleet electrification efforts in the country, and over the next several years, the deployment of battery-electric NGDVs and commercial-off-the-shelf delivery trucks will be a proving ground for local, state and federal officials to see firsthand what can be achieved with a vehicle that reduces both greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on fossil fuels.

BEVs provide the operational and environmental capabilities that are essential to the Postal Service's future, but the realities of America's geography, climate and infrastructure mean they cannot meet the entirety of America's delivery needs. That is why an ICE will power a quarter of the initial NGDV purchase. This fleet will still improve the Postal Service's sustainability credentials, with significantly improved fuel efficiency and larger capacity doing their part to reduce postal gas usage by 300 million gallons between now and the end of the decade and eliminate 3.5 million metric tons of carbon emissions by 2030.

### A better mobile workplace

The delivery truck is a carrier's workplace and the goal from the beginning has been to make the NGDV as safe, efficient and comfortable as any delivery vehicle available. Extensive field testing and collaboration with postal unions from the initial design stage ensured that the driver and the maintainer were always the priority.

From the ground up, the NGDV keeps postal employees safe. The cargo area is designed to keep carriers inside the NGDV as much as possible to avoid the many hazards of using the street to load and unload, and the sliding side door provides





## A lasting competitive edge

As the NGDV fleet is fully deployed in coming years, it will create opportunities to provide a wider range of delivery services and help win a greater share of America's package business — and put mail carriers in a better position to serve customers while lowering the cost to do so. NGDVs and the creation of a national charging infrastructure are bringing to life the vision and commitment to invest in a modern, high-performing, financially sustainable, competitive Postal Service — and they will be on America's roads this year.

easy curbside access, again to limit time on the street.

Collision avoidance technologies, visual and audible warning systems, traction control, automatic braking, 360-degree camera views, backup cameras, a heads-up touch-screen display, a driver's-side airbag and much more are also built into every NGDV to make this one of the safest and most secure delivery vehicles in the world. Even the NGDV's distinctive low front hood and oversize windshield are safety aspects, allowing carriers to see everything in front of them, particularly small children and animals.

The heat and cold that many LLV drivers have experienced is addressed with a modern air conditioning and heating system. Adjustable lumbar support in the driver's seat, along with seat and steering wheel adjustments, will deliver a comfortable and safe driving position for anyone between 4 feet, 11 inches and 6 feet, 2 inches tall. Seemingly minor but critical improvements like a docking and charging port for mobile delivery devices, intermittent wipers, a street-side exhaust pipe for ICE vehicles and an adjustable cupholder — along with many other meaningful changes — have also been incorporated into the NGDV to address things that got in the way of daily life with the LLV.

## BY THE NUMBERS

- ➔ 50,000 NGDVs in current order
- ➔ 263 cubic feet of cargo capacity
- ➔ 8,700 pounds gross vehicle weight rating
- ➔ 235.75 inches long by 84.5 inches wide by 111 inches high (approximately 18 feet, 8 inches by 7 feet by 9 feet, 3 inches)
- ➔ 76 inches (6 feet, 4 inches) height inside the cargo area





# CHARGING AHEAD



**JUSTIN GLASS**

Director, Fleet Management

**Vicki Stephen**, executive director of the Next Generation Delivery Vehicle program, and **Justin Glass**, director of fleet management, talk about modernizing the postal fleet to include electric delivery vehicles.

.....

**There is a lot of anticipation as the first Next Generation Delivery Vehicles begin to roll off the assembly line. What was the process that resulted in the final design and features for the new fleet of NGDVs?**

**VICKI STEPHEN:** When anyone goes out to buy a car for themselves,

they're incredibly particular about their requirements, and so was the Postal Service. We had to meet basic business needs in terms of greater space for packages, right-hand drive and the ability to reach the mailbox, but we also had a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a vehicle that would be awesome to use every day. So, we had a lot of employees testing prototypes, participating in focus groups and making sure the vehicles would be a wonderful mobile

workplace for our carriers and have great ergonomics and technologies.

**JUSTIN GLASS:** Where do you put the coat hook? That sounds like a trivial question, but if we put it in the wrong spot, it could inconvenience 200,000 of our colleagues every day for the life of the vehicles. Hands-on testing was important so we could identify all those little details that make a vehicle fun to be in and drive and to ensure there aren't inconveniences that get in the way of productivity. Employee testers chose where to put the coat hooks and many other aspects of the layout, and our mechanics had a big role in determining the engineering, so repairs would be simple. That's the value of designing a purpose-built vehicle: It can be exactly the way we want it, and it is.

### Electric vehicles require big changes in infrastructure. How do you prepare all the sites necessary to operate them?

**VICKI STEPHEN:** The first thing to know is that a lot of amperage is required to set up 100-plus charging stations in the back parking lot of a postal facility. The charging stations themselves aren't unique or complicated, but the power and charging infrastructure requires investment and maintenance, and so the decision about which facilities will get electric vehicles depends on the location of our future delivery facilities. Sorting and delivery centers are highest on the list because they usually have the requisite power, and they will anchor our future network.

**JUSTIN GLASS:** A key consideration is that our electric vehicles will all be charging overnight, at the same time, with each vehicle parked next

to its own charging station. So that means parking lot space and layout is really important. Safety is a primary consideration. We need to make sure that loading is done with adequate distance from other lot traffic. All of this requires thoughtful site visits and design at hundreds of locations.

### What are the criteria for whether a delivery operation gets an electric or internal combustion engine NGDV?

**JUSTIN GLASS:** It's the calculus of facility, lot space, power and the characteristics of the routes. Electric vehicles have major advantages when the routes are flatter, the distances aren't too long and the weather isn't too cold for too long in the winter. Internal combustion engines are better suited for steeper routes, longer distances and extended winter weather. We are taking a methodical approach to these investments and looking at every facility on a case-by-case basis to get the best fit.

**VICKI STEPHEN:** The most important thing to know is that every delivery operation will get new vehicles in the coming years, and they will be a major improvement over the current fleet. There are commercial-off-the-shelf electric vehicles we are deploying alongside NGDVs, and the rollout has already started. It's exciting to bring these new vehicles into delivery operations throughout the country.

### What do you think will be the biggest impact of modernizing the postal vehicle fleet?

**VICKI STEPHEN:** There are tremendous efficiencies that come with having larger vehicles that can carry more packages per trip. The combination of the new vehicles and the larger sorting and delivery centers will make our local delivery operations much more powerful and competitive. I see our new vehicles as tools for growing our business.

**JUSTIN GLASS:** With each new vehicle, we are putting a postal colleague into a better work environment, and that improves our ability to serve customers. I also think our customers are going to love seeing the new vehicles on their street, and that's a great impact to have.



**VICKI STEPHEN**  
Executive Director,  
Next Generation Delivery  
Vehicle Program



# Getting Smart

## USPS has revamped its approach to parcel lockers, with hundreds now on the horizon.

**F**or customers, USPS Smart Lockers are a free, secure and convenient way to safeguard packages. For business shippers of all sizes, a cost-effective, transparent approach to foiling porch pirates.

And for the Postal Service, they're the latest retail innovation under the Delivering for America plan, designed to align the organization to a transformed postal landscape. Deploying Smart Locker technologies will allow customers to pick up packages at their convenience, as most lockers are located in 24/7 lobbies, which creates a great customer experience in more modern Post Offices.

What began as a pilot project in 2021 at 10 retail sites in Northern Virginia received such a positive response that, by June of this year, the organization expects to have 517 of the electronic, keyless receptacles installed in nine states, including 22 sorting and delivery centers — with plans for many more in the works.

“I really feel the timing is now right for newer and more capable parcel lockers,” said Paul Bernicchi, manager of innovative technology implementation for USPS. He’s referring to the organization’s first attempt at parcel lockers years ago. The project was before its time and did not catch on.

Since then, USPS has developed a plan to make it easy and convenient to use Smart Lockers. The lessons learned from that original foray were taken into consideration for this purchase. The Smart Locker program is a strategic initiative that brings all the organization’s expertise to bear.

“This time it’s a lot more comprehensive,” said Armando Lopez, USPS director of product technology innovation.

The Postal Service is also reframing the project from one designed to answer an operational need — how to reduce the number of times a package is handled during delivery attempts — to one that puts market strategy first and foremost.



## How USPS Smart Lockers work

Customers are sent a six-digit access code and a QR code via email. They have five days to pick up their parcel at the locker site — a Post Office or sorting and delivery center lobby — using the QR code. Three reminder emails are sent; after five days, a final email alerts the customer to the code's expiration and explains that the package must now be picked up at the retail window.

Currently, the lockers support direct-to-locker deliveries, redeliveries and oversized PO Box packages. Soon they will support returns, as well.

said of her older customers. “Well, they all do now. That’s why we have these parcels!” she joked.

Digital natives and those comfortable with basic technology should have no problem, but even so, Bernicchi said the team is working on a series of enhancements that should make the user interface even simpler.

They want the front end of the process to be easy, too. Training sessions for employees are held regularly, and an internal page on Blue, the Postal Service employee intranet site, contains a trove of information on handling, depositing and retrieving parcels.



**The Smart Locker program is a strategic initiative that brings all the organization’s expertise to bear.**

## A game changer

As the rollout continues, the Sales and Marketing teams will be letting traditional retailers and e-commerce merchants know how to take advantage of Smart Lockers. The Postal Service is also making Smart Lockers available on its own software platforms, such as Retail Systems Software and Click-N-Ship, to optimize the offering.

Bernicchi is sanguine that the time has come for USPS Smart Lockers.

They will be another “game changer” for the organization, and even “monumental,” in his view.

Or as Bryant, the postmaster from Sequim, simply put it: “It’s one of the better ideas I think we’ve had.”

Cindy Bryant, postmaster for Sequim, WA, was sold from Day 1: “I love ’em. I’ve already asked for more.”

For her, the security provided to customers and the substantial time savings for retail associates are the biggest benefits.

Package-handling time in her office has been whittled from 2-3 hours a day to about 45 minutes — “so much quicker,” she said enthusiastically — and the new process means retail associates spend less time retrieving packages, and more time at the counter.

Becky Brockoff, officer in charge at the Post Office in Lester Prairie, MN, said they proved to be a godsend during peak. “We have a large PO Box section and they’ve come in very handy” — and saved those customers from waiting in line to claim their parcels.

The biggest hurdle both postmasters see is a slight learning curve for the tech-wary.

Bryant, who said her customer base skews older, does not think it will take long. “When COVID hit, nobody knew how to use their computers or smartphones,” she



*We Go Everywhere!*

# ZIP Code™

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# 56711



Looking at a map of the United States, have you ever noticed the spike that interrupts the smooth line along the northern border? That area is called the Northwest Angle. The northernmost Post Office in the contiguous United States is there in the town of Angle Inlet, MN, ZIP Code 56711.



## Angle Inlet, MN

Zooming in, you'll note that this piece of land is separated from the U.S. mainland by water. By all appearances, it should be part of Canada. So, why is it part of Minnesota?

At the end of the Revolutionary War, in the 1783 Treaty of Paris, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin and John Jay negotiated the U.S. border with the British, who had dominion over Canada. They plotted a line through a point on Lake of the Woods "and from thence on a due west course to the river Mississippi." But it did not intersect the Mississippi. The map

they consulted was inaccurate.

The error was corrected in the

*Left:* A quirk of history resulted in the Northwest Angle becoming part of the United States in 1783.

Anglo-American Convention of 1818 by running the boundary southward to the 49th parallel and then westward. This path runs across water, cutting the Northwest Angle off from the mainland to form that interesting spike in the borderline.



*Above:* Angle Inlet is a prime destination for anglers.

Angle Inlet is not an easy place to get to. If you don't arrive on a boat or floatplane, the only overland access is through an international border crossing. Visitors must check in with the Canada Border Services Agency, then report reentry to the





*Above:* Angle Inlet is home to the most northerly Post Office in the contiguous United States.

United States, and go through the same process with U.S. Customs and Border Protection when departing. Locals are not exempt — even the school bus driver checks in with border agents several times along a route that winds through the backwoods of Manitoba, Canada.

Mail for Angle Inlet comes through Grand Forks, ND, and then stops in Warroad, MN. A subcontractor transports the mail to Angle Inlet and Oak Island (ZIP Code 56741) on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and has to cross the border as well. Residents of Angle Inlet pick up their mail at the Post Office, where about 100 people have PO Boxes.

What draws people to this far-flung locale? For most, the answer is fishing. Lake of the Woods, which straddles the northern U.S. border, has nearly 1 million acres of water — about two-thirds in Canada.



*Above:* Lake of the Woods is a vital lifeline for the residents of Angle Inlet.

## Residents of Angle Inlet pick up their mail at the Post Office, where about 100 people have PO Boxes.

With more than 14,500 islands and 25,000 miles of shoreline, there is plenty of fish habitat. Officials manage walleye, sauger and northern pike to provide a high catch rate or trophy size. Anglers also hook smallmouth bass, yellow perch and lake sturgeon. Fishing resorts offer amenities such as guided excursions, boats, heated fish houses and fish cleaning.

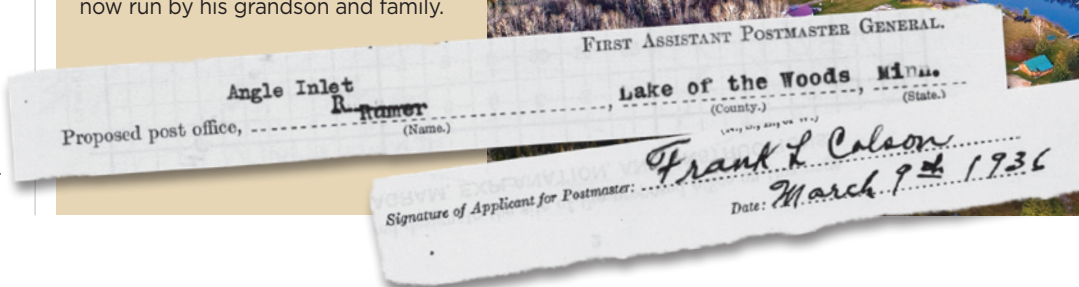
Most of the forest in the Northwest Angle is tribal land on the Red Lake

Reservation, though scattered state forest parcels are open to visitors. Camping, hiking, hunting and birding are popular activities; people enjoy snowmobiling, skiing, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing in the winter months.

There's a nine-hole golf course in Angle Inlet with sand greens and a view of the lake. If you play a round, stop in the Post Office — next to the clubhouse — to say hi to a fellow postal employee.

### Pioneering Family

Frank Lorenzo Colson, nicknamed Jake, moved to the Northwest Angle in the early 1920s and pioneered the area. He helped build the first Post Office in Angle Inlet and served as its first postmaster, from 1936 to 1968. The fishing resort he opened is now run by his grandson and family.



# FORWARD MOTION

## History reflects the Postal Service's role as a transformative leader in American transportation.

**A** missive by missile? That was the bold idea in 1959 when a Navy submarine fired a guided missile carrying 3,000 letters toward a naval auxiliary air station in Florida. Traversing more than 100 miles in 22 minutes, the projectile's paper payload consisted entirely of letters in special commemorative envelopes from Postmaster General Arthur Summerfield to leading government officials and prominent citizens with a special interest in the Post Office Department, the forerunner of the U.S. Postal Service.

"Before man reaches the moon," Summerfield said during coverage of the event, "mail will be delivered within hours from New York to California, to England, to India or to Australia by guided missiles."

Alas, history has recorded the one-time experiment as a display of Cold War showmanship: See? The U.S. military is capable of such precision in missile flight that it can be considered for postal use. (If you're wondering where the letters were stored, that would be in the space designed to hold the missile's thermonuclear warhead.)

Nevertheless, the episode exemplifies the pioneering spirit of the Postal Service throughout its history when it comes to developing faster, better ways of moving the U.S. Mail.

From stagecoaches to steamboats to trains to planes to just about every kind of automobile imaginable — including the

*Left:* Postmaster General Arthur Summerfield was a high-profile advocate for mail delivery by guided missile.

future-facing Next Generation Delivery Vehicle, which embraces the potential of battery-electric power — USPS has made optimal use of evolving modes of transportation.

And, at crucial points in time, the Postal Service has done much more than follow trends: It has been the driving force behind fundamental transportation infrastructure that has enabled the country to grow and prosper.



### Binding the nation

In the Revolutionary era, founding father George Washington envisioned a nation bound together by post roads and post offices — a mail system that would ensure the free flow of information between citizens and their government.





*Left:* A rural carrier stands next to his wagon circa 1901.

Building on the Postal Clause in Article I, Section 8, of the Constitution, the Postal Act of 1792 defined the character of the young Post Office Department, with spirited congressional debate examining issues of a free press, personal privacy and national growth.

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## ***From its inception as the Post Office Department, USPS has shaped the evolution of transportation.***

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Breaking away from postal practices under British rule, newspapers could be mailed at low rates to promote the spread of news throughout the states; postal officials were forbidden to open any letters unless they were undeliverable; and Congress assumed responsibility for the creation of postal routes, ensuring that mail delivery would help lead expansion and development instead of only serve existing communities.

By that time, the Post Office Department had already

*Right:* As an early and significant patron of America's railroad operators, the Post Office Department helped create the world's largest rail network.

begun contracting with stagecoach owners to carry mail along designated post roads, which were growing exponentially following the Colonial era, when Benjamin Franklin — later to become the country's first postmaster general — boosted their expansion and efficient use as joint postmaster general for the Crown.

Post roads increased from 59,473 miles at the beginning of 1819 to 84,860 by the end of 1823. A postal presence was available for citizens in 22 states in 1819, including the newest states of Illinois and Alabama.

Spurred by the 1849 California Gold Rush and the Homestead Act of 1862, which Congress passed to entice settlers into the Great Plains with the promise of 160 acres of free land, the nation grew westward in the 19th century. Despite their hunger for property and prosperity, pioneers still wanted to feel connected to the rest of the

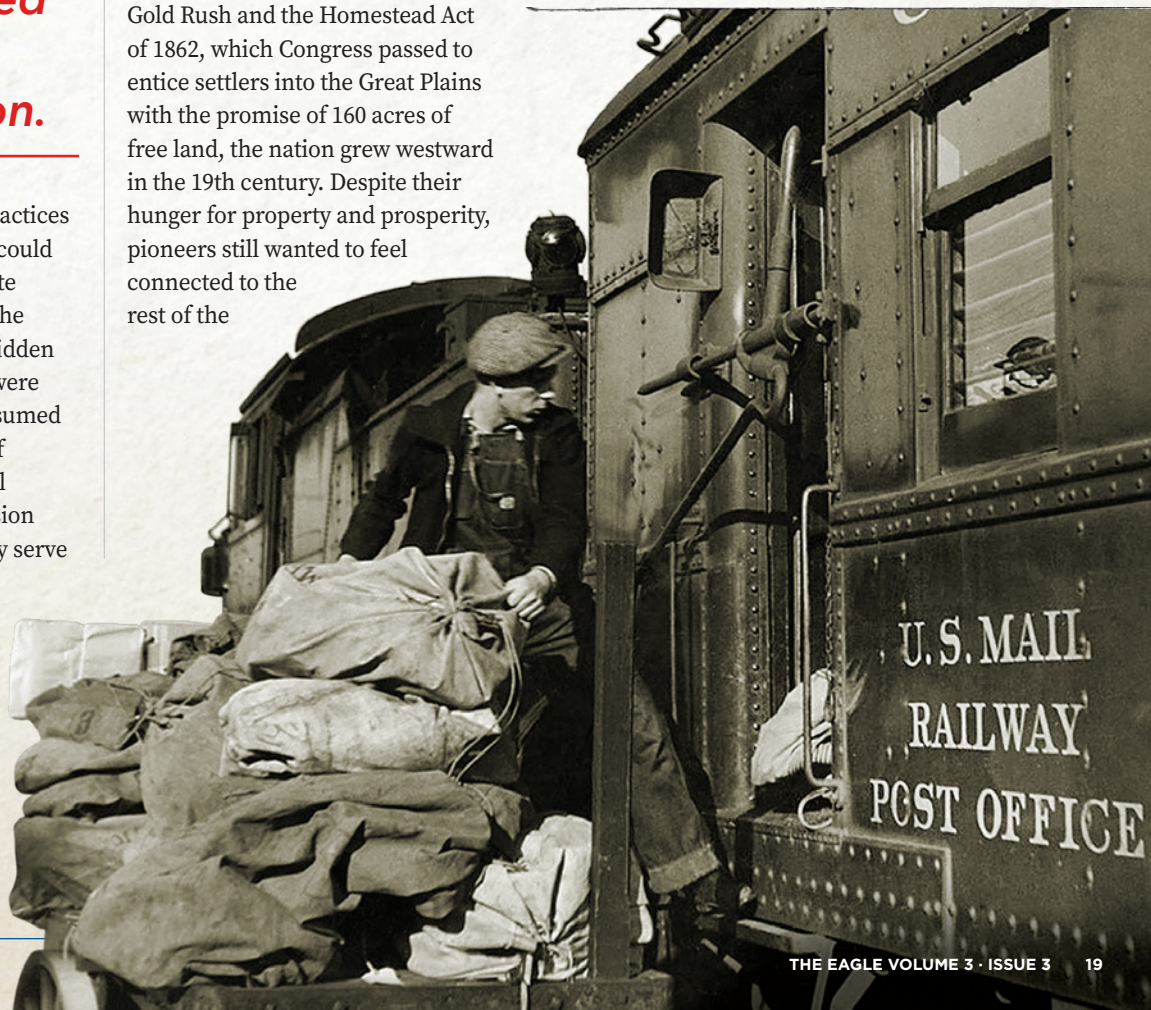
country, at a time when mail was the primary medium of news and information.

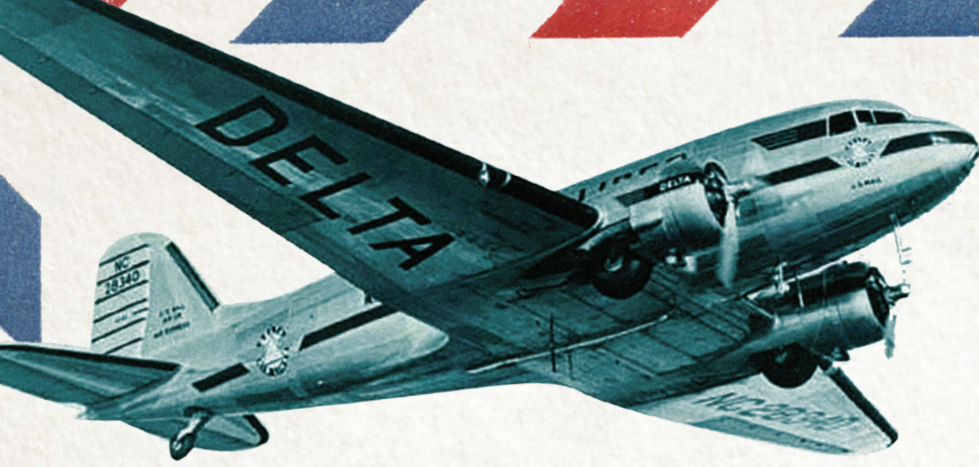
Through mail contracts, Congress provided financial incentives to a growing number of stagecoach lines to create and maintain mail routes, which became lifelines into the new territories, populating them with wave upon wave of migrants and fortune seekers.

### **All aboard!**

The 19th century also saw the rise of the railroad, with mail closely linked to its growth and sustenance.

Train cars began carrying mail in 1832, and postal officials inaugurated the Railway Mail Service in 1864, creating specially designed Railway Post Office cars where clerks could sort mail in transit. Lasting for over a century, Railway Mail Service carried the majority of the country's mail for many decades.





In 1838, all U.S. railroads were designated as post roads, encouraging wider access for mail onto America's burgeoning rail lines, launching a period of tremendous growth. By 1840, only 2,818 miles of railroad track had been laid in the United States. By the beginning of the Civil War 21 years later, 30,000 miles of track were carrying passengers and mail throughout the country.

The expanded use of railroads greatly reduced mail transportation time. For example, in 1835, mail going from New York City to Raleigh, NC, took about 94 hours. Two years later, the time had been cut nearly in half to 55 hours. By 1885, it was more than halved again to just over 19 hours.

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## **Innovations in transportation have made mail delivery faster and more reliable.**

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Bolstered by mail contracts and the growing country's desire for mail connectivity, railroads would become the dominant force in commercial transportation until the ascent of automobiles, highways and airlines in the 20th century.

In 1930, more than 10,000 trains moved mail. Following the passage of the Transportation Act of 1958, which allowed the discontinuance of money-losing passenger trains, mail-carrying passenger trains began a rapid decline.

### **Taking flight**

The Post Office Department's most extraordinary role in transportation was played in the sky. Following several years of experimental mail flights starting in 1911, Congress recognized the potential of commercial aviation and appropriated funds for airmail service that began in 1918, initially in collaboration with the Army.

Later that year, the Post Office Department took over all phases of airmail service, using newly hired civilian pilots and mechanics, and six specially built planes from the Standard Aircraft Corp.

To improve safety, navigation and reliability in the years following, the department installed radio stations at airfields, additional landing fields, towers, beacons, searchlights and boundary markers across the country — as well as equipped planes with luminescent instruments, navigational lights and parachute flares — laying the groundwork for the airline industry to offer passenger service.

The Air Mail Act of 1925, also known as the Kelly Act, recognized the department's leadership role in the aviation field. The act sought to "encourage commercial aviation" by authorizing the postmaster general to contract with airlines to carry mail. Combined with the Air Commerce Act of 1926, the legislation provided the basis for the U.S. commercial aviation industry.

Once commercial airlines began taking over airmail flights in 1926, they depended upon mail transportation contracts for their survival until passenger traffic picked up in the late

*Left:* Commercial air carriers depended upon mail contracts for their survival until the 1930s, when aircraft like the iconic Douglas DC-3 gave airlines the ability to generate sufficient revenue from paying passengers.

1930s. In that transitional period, the Post Office Department transferred its lights, airways and radio service to the Department of Commerce, including 17 fully equipped stations, 89 emergency landing fields and 405 beacons. With a few exceptions, terminal airports were transferred to the municipalities in which they were located.

Following a controversial period in the early 1930s around government airmail contracts, the Air Mail Act of 1934 ensured a more even distribution of business and lower rates that forced airlines and aircraft manufacturers to devote more attention to serving passengers.



*Above:* New York City Postmaster Thomas Patten hands a bag of letters to Lt. Torrey Webb for one of the first regularly scheduled airmail flights in the United States in 1918.

### **The next big thing?**

The future may or may not bring an opportunity for the Postal Service to fundamentally shape a new transportation sector like commercial aviation.

Or to grow the nation as it did through its support of road and rail infrastructure.

Yet the same impulse can be seen in every advancement the organization makes — in transportation, technology or otherwise:

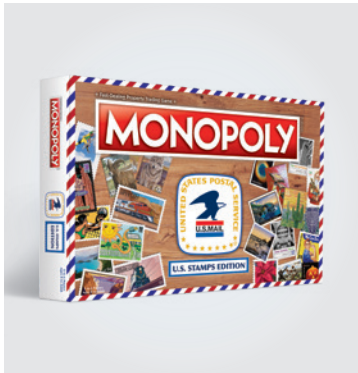
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