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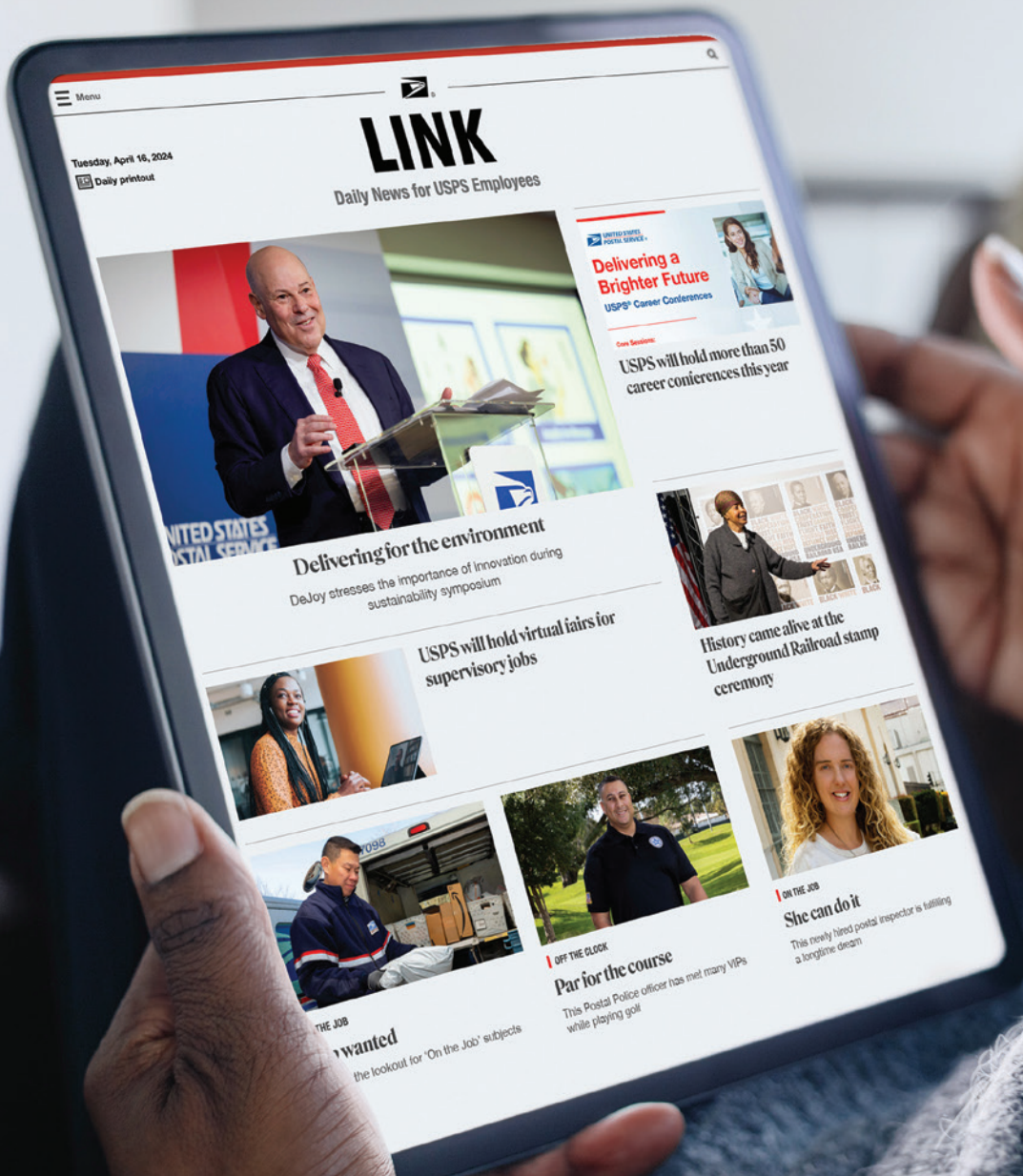
MAGAZINE



Gaining Ground

*A Fantastic First Year for
USPS Ground Advantage*

See the new look of **LINK**



Your **LINK** to news about **benefits and wellness**

Your **LINK** to news about **each other**

Your **LINK** to news about **the Postal Service**



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**DELIVERING
FOR AMERICA**

Learn more about
the Postal Service's
10-year strategic plan
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From the Postmaster General

I am pleased to say we have a hit on our hands. A year after introducing USPS Ground Advantage, customers of all kinds are finding that it provides excellent value. As a result, we have seen strong growth in our package shipping business. It must be said that we could not have offered Ground Advantage several years ago. The operating model for our network had to change, our modernization efforts had to begin and our core processes had to improve. Delivering for America — our 10-year transformation plan — is fundamentally a plan for growth, and our success with Ground Advantage shows that plan in action.



As explored in the cover article for this edition, Ground Advantage has been winning new package customers and gaining more business from existing ones since it was launched in July 2023. Thanks to this compelling product, package volume is growing by leaps and bounds, and we are generating more revenue. Crucially, in a year when the overall market for shipping packages declined, we gained market share. That's a tremendous win for the Postal Service and Delivering for America.

With the 2024 general election just a few months away, we assess the Postal Service's readiness to fulfill our clearly defined, nonpartisan responsibility of handling Election Mail nationwide. Our committed Election and Government Mail Services team has strategies to replicate our successes from the 2020 general election and the 2022 midterms.

We also look at how campaigns are increasingly capitalizing on the value of Political Mail to inform, educate and mobilize the American electorate.

Inflation continues to affect USPS to the tune of billions of dollars every year. In this issue, we examine those impacts. We also explore the new Customer Experience Vision Activation pilot, which will be rolled out at sorting and distribution centers across the nation, and how it will strengthen our relationship with customers.

With these and future topics, *The Eagle* 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.

Louis DeJoy

Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer
United States Postal Service

CONTENTS



4 **The Bite of Inflation**

Feeling the pain of higher prices

Economic trends put financial pressure on consumers — and the Postal Service, too.

6 **Voters Value Political Mail**

An effective medium's enduring appeal

Campaigns are spending more money than ever to reach voters through their mailboxes.

8 **Gaining Ground**

A fantastic first year for USPS Ground Advantage

Customers are responding to the compelling product's reach, reliability and value.

12 **Delivering America's Election Mail**

How the Postal Service executes a clearly defined mission

Employees at every level have a critical role.

18 **Enhancing the Customer Experience**

What improved service means to the bottom line

The CX Vision Activation pilot is coming your way.

IN THIS ISSUE

1 **From the Postmaster General**
Packages: delivering for USPS

3 **Spotlight**
Lessons on and off the field

14 **Change Leaders**
Election Mail: the team's winning strategy

16 **We Go Everywhere!**
A visit to ZIP Code 60606

SPOTLIGHT SEARCH >

Know a postal employee who is making a difference through volunteer work or community service?

Send Spotlight nominations to The_Eagle@usps.gov.

Lessons on and off the Field

As a coach, this USPS employee helps young athletes develop core skills.

Clifton Davis, a retail associate in Midway, TX, is a board member and volunteer coach for the Huntsville Youth Football League (HYFL).

“I played football when I was younger, so it’s something I’m into,” he said. “It’s great to watch the kids grow throughout the year. And it’s a way of giving back to my community.”

Davis guides players who are 5 to 8 years old. “The main thing, of course, is developing the basic fundamentals of football — the core principles that all players, whether they’re 5 or 25, need to play a sport,” Davis said. “But I also let them know there are life lessons in all of it.”

Coaches are screened by the HYFL to find qualified candidates who know the game and have the character to work with impressionable young people. It takes a certain temperament to interact with little kids and their big emotions — not to mention parents and their expectations.

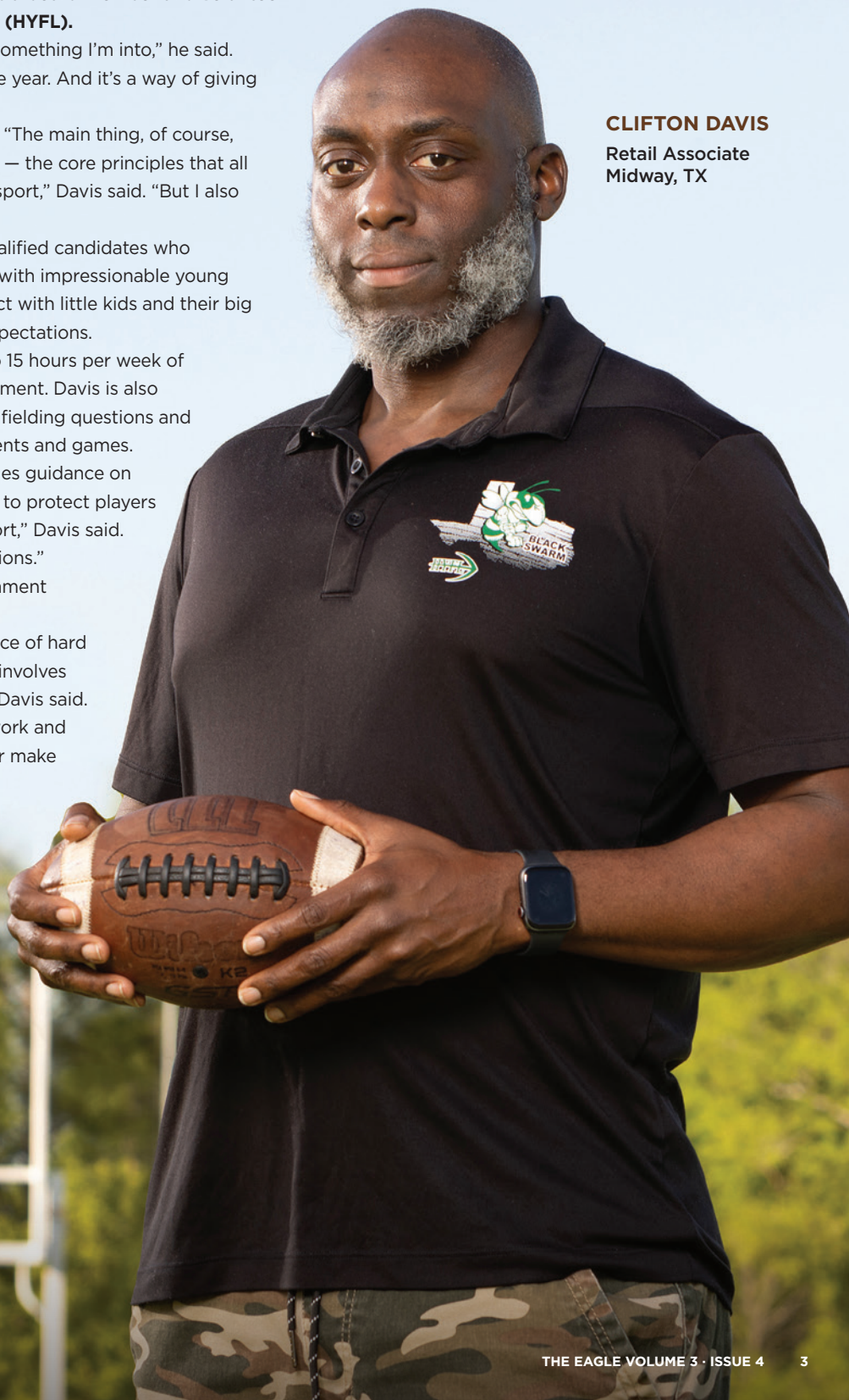
A well-prepared HYFL coach may put in up to 15 hours per week of planning and practice, a significant time commitment. Davis is also a board member and handles public relations — fielding questions and informing the community about registration, events and games.

Training is governed by the NFL, which provides guidance on coaching practices, playing techniques and how to protect players from unnecessary risk. “Football is a contact sport,” Davis said. “We want to prevent injuries, especially concussions.”

The aim is to provide a safe, fun learning environment for youth in the community.

Coaching also includes teaching the importance of hard work and what it takes to be a champion. “That involves lots of drills and lots of positive reinforcement,” Davis said. “It’s about developing good habits, great teamwork and confidence in themselves. You can be nervous or make a mistake — it’s OK.”

CLIFTON DAVIS
Retail Associate
Midway, TX



“It’s great to watch the kids grow throughout the year.”

THE BITE OF INFLATION

Consumers aren't the only ones affected by higher prices. USPS feels their pain, too.

Everyone who makes purchases of any kind has seen it — in the grocery store, at the gas pump and beyond: In recent years, costs have been rising for products and services.

Costs have gone up for the Postal Service, too, but unlike most businesses, it cannot reflexively increase prices. In fact, the constraints of dated laws governing major expenditures, as well as inherent delays in pricing adjustments, can leave USPS exposed to the impact of inflation for up to a year. Even then, new postage rates will not cover cost increases that happen during the approval process.

Not normal

Usually, a low, constant inflation rate is a sign of a healthy, vibrant, growing economy. The U.S. economy grew on average a little over 2.5 percent annually from 1920 to 2019. A century of phenomenal economic prosperity for the country has resulted from mostly low and stable rates of inflation — despite sustained years of double-digit numbers in the 1970s and early 1980s, bouts of recession since then, and even the Great Depression of the 1930s.

But stability requires a delicate balance between supply and demand. This was shattered in the 2020s as the COVID-19 pandemic, elevated consumer demand, increased government spending, broken supply chains and a war in Europe, to name just a few factors, took their toll on economies around the world.

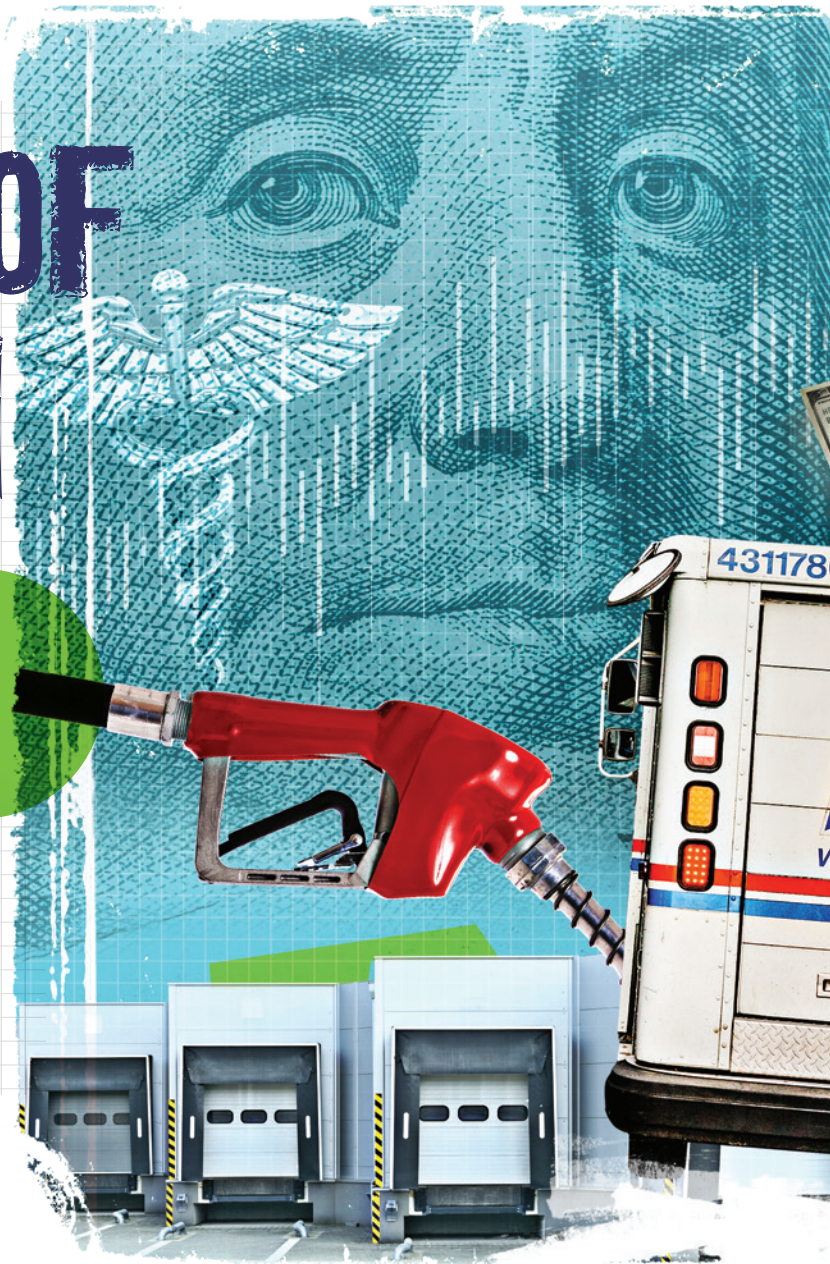
For the United States, which experienced extremely low inflation the previous decade, that meant a sudden,

fivefold year-over-year increase in the key Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) inflation rate: 7 percent in 2021 and a further 6.5 percent increase in 2022. Since then, U.S. inflation rates have been about 50 percent higher than the average for the decade before the pandemic.

When costs rise faster than revenue

Like every business, the buying power of the Postal Service is eroded by high inflation. Essentials like fuel, energy, transportation, rent and utilities cost more. Health care premiums rise and even long-term procurement contracts for supplies and facilities — which are typically less affected by economic fluctuations — have become more costly as suppliers raise prices to adjust for economic uncertainty.

And there can be inflation adjustments to the largest USPS expense category: labor costs. This includes cost-





Rising costs are compounded by pricing authority limits. Current postal pricing regulations require a lengthy notice period for postage price increases, which means the Postal Service is frequently playing catch-up with pricing — and missing out on needed revenue — when inflation rises quickly.

Return to normalcy?

Although economic projections are never certain, the days of high inflation seem to be ending. A return to stable prices and low inflation will eventually ease some financial pressures.

Had the Delivering for America plan been fully implemented and not impacted by unusual inflation, projections show the Postal Service would have recorded break-even results for fiscal year 2023 instead of a net loss of \$6.5 billion.

Certainly, the underlying business of the Postal Service is improving as its modernization and transformation plan progresses. If the Delivering for America plan is fully implemented and the rate of inflation slows, the Postal Service will be well positioned to operate as Congress intended: financially strong and self-sufficient, able to withstand future economic challenges and capable of investing in the future to better serve the American public.

WHAT IS INFLATION?

of-living increases that may be negotiated into collective bargaining agreements to help union employees deal with rising prices.

Another inflation metric, the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W), impacts the Postal Service's retirement obligations, which are calculated by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. In fiscal year 2023, a rising CPI-W rate contributed to an increase in the organization's Federal Employees Retirement System payment by \$500 million, to \$2.1 billion, and the Civil Service Retirement System payment by \$700 million, to \$3.0 billion.

INFLATION MEASURES THE AVERAGE RISE IN PRICE for a group of products and services, which is caused by the market dynamics of supply and demand. For instance, if a computer chip is hard to come by, its price tends to rise. If that happens to a broad group of products, the rate of inflation increases. A sharp rise in dollars in the economy relative to available goods and services can also cause prices to increase. This can happen when the government overspends or when the Federal Reserve increases the supply of money.



Voters Value Political Mail

Every candidate knows how important it is to engage voters on important issues and encourage them to get out and vote. Political Mail, sent to voters' homes, remains one of the most effective ways of helping campaigns meet these goals.



By definition, the category includes any material mailed for campaign purposes by a registered political candidate, campaign committee, or committee of a political party, or any material mailed by a political action committee or organization engaging in issue advocacy or voter mobilization. It may be sent for any public election — partisan or nonpartisan — for which there is a ballot.

Even as many other areas of communication have gone digital, Political Mail continues to grow — and campaigns have poured more money than ever into the medium in recent election cycles. With the U.S.

general election just months away, 2024 will be no exception.

Campaigns are looking to capitalize on Political Mail's proven ability to help inform, educate and mobilize the American electorate. In fact, 77 percent of political consultants surveyed for a 2024 joint USPS and American Association of Political Consultants (AAPC) study anticipate direct mail will be a very effective political advertising channel during this year's election cycle, up from 61 percent in 2020.

Growth trajectory

Political Mail's success is well documented — its volume grew from 2.9 billion pieces for

the 2018 midterm election cycle to 3.9 billion in the 2022 midterms, a 34 percent increase. Political Mail spending increased more sharply, at 44 percent, in those four years, from \$575 million in 2018 to \$826 million in 2022, according to USPS data.

Campaign literature mailed to voters' homes early in the election cycle enables candidates to introduce themselves, indicate their party affiliation and establish their credibility on key issues. Subsequent mailings are designed to educate and create trust with voters. Among the 2,529 voters USPS and AAPC surveyed from gubernatorial and mayoral elections in November 2023, 42 percent recall receiving

Political Mail daily or weekly during the election cycle.

In Political Mail they trust

Voters perceive direct mail as the most trusted source of information about political candidates, according to the USPS/AAPC study. Fifty-six percent of voters ranked direct mail as more credible than television, emails, websites, radio and other advertising channels.

Gen Zers, born between 1997 and 2012, tend to check their mailboxes less than other generations but are beginning to have a meaningful impact on election cycles.

While 60 percent of the Gen Z voters surveyed said that direct mail was harder to ignore than online and television ads — and that they trust direct mail more than online political advertising — just 52 percent of older voters agreed.

Trust also translates into a higher tendency to act for millennials and Gen Zers. According to the study,

68 percent of millennial voters, born between 1981 and 1996, and 63 percent of Gen Z voters fact-check Political Mail information on the internet after reading it. In addition, among voters, 69 percent of millennials and 68 percent of Gen Zers will search online for more information about a political race after reading Political Mail.

Integrated impact

Political Mail is an even more effective campaign tool when it is integrated with digital channels. Political campaigns use QR codes and web addresses on their mailings and time them with other activities for a more impactful multimedia messaging effort. Political Mail promotions on Informed Delivery continue to grow, too, helping campaigns directly reach a broad demographic of voters digitally and coordinate messaging across multiple political advertising channels.



Of those Informed Delivery users surveyed for the USPS/AAPC study who recalled seeing Political Mail previews, 47 percent were more motivated to read it when it arrived.

What does the future hold?

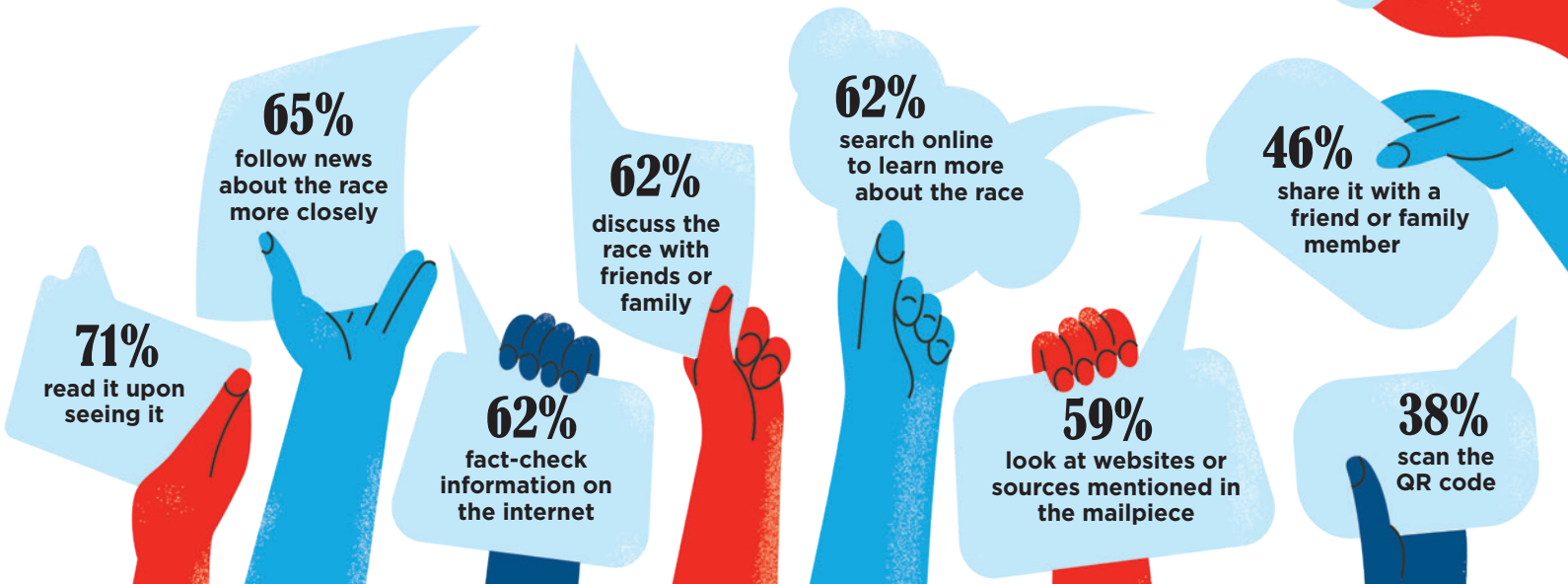
Given all the attention paid to broadcast, online and social media, and skyrocketing campaign spending in recent years, it is easy to assume that those channels are the most effective way for politicians to engage with voters. The truth is, regardless of how digitally focused society becomes, Political Mail works exceptionally well in raising awareness about candidates, persuading on public policy issues and motivating voters to vote — and does so with high credibility, reach and targeting. This is why spending on Political Mail is expected to rise again in 2024 and remain a vital part of any successful campaign communication strategy.



► Get Out the Vote

- Campaigns can increase the likelihood of voter engagement by including relevant information; providing credible sources or fact-checking information; prioritizing design and visual appeal; and personally addressing the mailpiece.

Many voters surveyed indicate they will take action after receiving Political Mail.



It's been a fantastic first year for USPS Ground Advantage.

From the moment it was introduced, business customers new and old have embraced this compelling product for its reach, reliability and value.

Using a more efficient postal network, Ground Advantage has truly delivered on its promise to give American businesses a dependable, consistent shipping option that saves them money, all while generating strong revenue growth for USPS. After years of its competitors leading in the package business, the Postal Service is finally gaining ground by ramping up its efficiency and service performance, all while keeping the simplicity and affordability of Ground Advantage intact.

The package shipping market is maturing. The buying frenzy of the pandemic is gone, replaced by a cost consciousness among consumers and sellers that has corrected the shipping demands

of the lockdown boom. In this new environment, businesses have started looking for more cost control and new shipping options that still offer reliable and consistent service standards but entice buyers influenced more by price.

Ground Advantage meets and exceeds those needs. Guided by the Delivering for America plan, the

Postal Service has improved the efficiency and reliability of its revamped ground transportation network and it has expanded its package processing capacity. This has enabled the creation of this user-friendly and affordably priced shipping product that

GROUND ADVANTAGE

GROUND ADVANTAGE



makes USPS a much more attractive shipping partner for American businesses.

With Ground Advantage, the Postal Service has removed the ambiguity and complexities of a legacy product line that was difficult to explain and often hard to sell. In its place is a single, clearly defined ground product that gives



“The value of USPS Ground Advantage has really hit home with shippers of all sizes. They were looking for a ground product that was simple, affordable and reliable, and that is what Ground Advantage delivers.”

— **Jacqueline Krage Strako**, Chief Commerce and Business Solutions Officer

shippers a reliable, affordable way to send packages up to 70 pounds to every address in the contiguous United States, with a day-specific service standard of 2-5 days, depending on the distance the package must travel.

The right product at the right time

Ground Advantage has been an instant success. Package volume has grown substantially in every fiscal quarter since the product was launched in July 2023, and in the key market of packages over 1 pound, Ground Advantage has accounted for a 375 percent increase in volume — a near quadrupling in the number of packages in that weight class.



Alone, this is a remarkable achievement, but the impact of Ground Advantage goes even deeper. The value customers derive from Ground Advantage has created a halo effect that influences how they look at the Postal Service’s entire product portfolio. Because of this, interest in all of the Postal Service’s shipping products has risen, and volumes across the board have been up more than 4 percent since Ground Advantage was introduced.

This is creating real gains for USPS. After years of ceding the package market to its rivals, the Postal Service is now growing volume and increasing market share — and it is doing so even when demand for packages is down year over year. That means businesses are seeing the value a transformed USPS can deliver.

Ground Advantage is boosting revenue growth, too. In the 2023 peak season, for instance, the product was the primary driver of an additional \$240 million in sales. Package revenue has been up in every quarter since Ground Advantage was launched, and the product is expected to contribute significantly to the \$2.1 billion in new shipping revenue forecast by the Postal Service for fiscal year 2024.

A winning formula

Ground Advantage is a product of the Delivering for America plan. For years, the Postal Service's competitiveness in the package shipping business was stymied by the requirements of a stand-alone parcel business. Now that the transformation plan has combined all USPS processing — both mail and packages — into a single mailstream and significantly reduced the organization's reliance on airfreight, the organization has been able to create a robust, lower-cost and more efficient ground transportation network that can fully meet the service standard of 2-5 days needed to distinguish Ground Advantage as a competitive alternative to rival products.

Delivering for America has also removed the duplication of the legacy postal network and nearly tripled USPS package sorting capacity, all while improving the efficiency of the processing network. This streamlining allowed the Postal Service to retire its complex First-Class Package Services subcategory — a mix of air and ground products — and replace it with a single ground product that is simple, reliable,

affordable and easily compared with competing ground products.

Ground Advantage is designed to provide American businesses — from small shippers to large commercial retailers — the best value for every dollar they spend. Beyond the benefits of a postal network that reaches all 167 million addresses in the country six and seven days a week, Ground Advantage provides much more than other ground shipping

products. There are no residential surcharges, invoicing fees or add-ons like compounding fuel charges, and every Ground Advantage order includes free insurance of up to \$100 and free forwarding. It's a winning formula that attracts new customers and gains more business from existing ones despite the continued and sustained pressures of the highly competitive small package business.



"We are building USPS Ground Advantage together with our customers, not just for them. That idea of partnership drives every decision we've made in marketing this product, and that has played a big part in our customers' enthusiasm for USPS Ground Advantage."

— Shelia Holman, Marketing Vice President

Market awareness

The success of Ground Advantage was bolstered by a powerful and effective multichannel marketing strategy across TV, radio and social media that ensured existing and potential customers were fully informed of the product's core strengths and the premium value it provided over existing ground shipping options.

A smart and targeted campaign blitz that started prior to the launch has since reached millions

of shippers throughout the United States, telling them in clear and certain language that the Postal Service has heard their calls for affordability, reliability and transparency, and has created a valuable shipping option with a reach that cannot be matched.

Building on the remarkable success of that initial campaign, the Postal Service's marketing team launched its second salvo in April, dubbed "Turn Shipping to Your Advantage." This campaign, featuring postal employees, focuses on the simplicity, affordability and reliability of Ground Advantage.

Supported by USPS marketing know-how, Ground Advantage now enters its second year with growing market penetration and a clear message that it is the strongest ground shipping option for all packages under 70 pounds.

Built for growth

The future is bright for Ground Advantage. From mom-and-pop shops to large business-to-business shippers, companies are embracing it as their preferred shipping product and continuing to add volume every quarter. Hundreds of large commercial clients have committed to contracts. Ground Advantage also makes the Postal Service more competitive for packages weighing 5-20 pounds, a category more focused on business-to-business shipping that could open new revenue opportunities for the Postal Service.

In a span of 12 months, USPS has demonstrated to

businesses that they can acquire a superior ground product at a more economical cost. This helps American companies save money and the Postal Service achieve the revenue targets outlined in the Delivering for America plan. Additionally, USPS holds the exclusive position of being the only shipper that serves every address in the nation. This exceptional distinction will only be further strengthened as competitors continue to withdraw in the future.

Ground Advantage won market share and volume at a time when demand for package shipping shrank. That is a powerful message to customers and rivals alike that the Postal Service is ready and willing to gain ground where the competition is hottest. And with Ground Advantage now established as the right product at the right price for American businesses, it is poised for even greater success as demand for package shipping shows signs of a healthy rebound.



Scan this QR code for a short video on how the USPS marketing team brought the "Turn Shipping to Your Advantage" campaign to life.



AS THE COUNTRY PREPARES for the 2024 general election on Nov. 5, the U.S. Postal Service is well prepared to fulfill its clearly defined, nonpartisan role to process, transport and deliver the nation's Election Mail safely, securely and on time.



DELIVERING AMERICA'S ELECTION MAIL

USPS Election Mail planning touches every internal mail operation, with employees at every level playing a critical role. This organization-wide planning commitment deepened in 2022 when the Postal Service formed the full-time Election and Government Mail Services team, led by Director Adrienne Marshall, reporting directly to an Executive Leadership Team advisory committee.

"It takes the collective effort of 640,000 postal employees to ensure the safe, timely and secure processing, transportation and delivery of the nation's Election Mail," Marshall said. "We could not consistently achieve our high level of performance without the dedication and commitment of our entire workforce."

Since its launch, the Election and Government Mail Services team has formalized and centralized the proven strategies, processes and procedures that have maintained the Postal Service's robust and effective performance during previous election seasons. Supported by 50 customer relations managers, it has also enhanced and expanded postal outreach to local, state and federal election officials and their mail service providers.

Educating election officials

In 2024, the team's outreach will include in-person contact with more than 12,000 election

officials across the country and regular appearances at state conferences. If election officials choose to use the mail as part of their elections, these touchpoints educate them on how to do so effectively.

The team has also published online and mailed to all boards of elections the updated Postal Service's Official Election Mail

A CLEARLY DEFINED MISSION

Election Mail is a clearly defined category, limited to any item mailed to or from authorized local, state and federal election officials that enables American citizens to participate in the voting process. This includes ballot materials, voter registration cards, absentee voting applications and polling place notifications.

“Our entire Postal Service team takes great pride in playing an indispensable role in supporting America’s election officials. As in prior elections, we will deliver the nation’s Election Mail securely and on time.”

— Louis DeJoy, Postmaster General



Kit (Kit 600). This resource guides election officials and their mailing partners through the Election Mail process, including the correct use of Service Type Identifier, or STID, tags for each subcategory of Election Mail and accurate tracking and reporting of their mail through Informed Visibility — a free service. Election officials can also learn how to enhance voter awareness of Election Mail with Informed Delivery — which is also free.

Safe and secure delivery

The 640,000 employees of the Postal Service are behind the organization’s consistently high level of performance during election cycles. The Election and Government Mail Services team’s focus on continuing that success includes new resources for supervisors. Information campaigns, including posters and the Informed Facility system, are being used to educate employees at every level — not just those

processing and delivering mail — to identify Election Mail, especially mail-in ballots, and ensure its safe and timely passage through the postal network.

A joint task force with union leaders has also created a system of ballot ambassadors to monitor Election Mail flows as Election Day nears. These ballot ambassadors will enhance a proven system of oversight involving USPS and U.S. Postal Inspection Service personnel, as well as partners in local, state and federal law enforcement. In a coordinated effort, they will work to protect postal facilities and infrastructure, track ballots and all other Election Mail, and offer protection and support for election officials who suspect fraud or are the victim of threats.

A history of success

The successful handling of Election Mail is the result of effective long-standing USPS processes and practices. In addition to the operational steps taken throughout the year to prioritize Election Mail, the Postal Service will once again deploy extraordinary measures in 2024 — in the final weeks leading up to and following the general election — to enhance the security and timely delivery of mail-in ballots. Extra deliveries and collections, special pickups, expanded processing facility hours,

98.96%

The percentage of **BALLOTS DELIVERED** to election officials **WITHIN THREE DAYS** in the 2022 election cycle.

specialized sort plans at processing facilities to expedite delivery, and local turnaround to bypass regional processing if necessary — these are all measures that reflect the Postal Service’s commitment to ensuring that every properly mailed ballot counts.

OUR MESSAGE TO VOTERS

Voter education and outreach are led by state and local election officials. USPS supplements this effort with a simple message for eligible voters who choose to vote by mail.

- ✓ **KNOW YOUR STATE’S REQUIREMENTS**
- ✓ **REQUEST MAIL-IN BALLOTS EARLY**
- ✓ **MAIL COMPLETED BALLOTS EARLY**

Election Mail: The Team's

Adrienne Marshall, director of Election and Government Mail Services, and **James Holland**, customer relations manager for Massachusetts-Rhode Island District, discuss the Postal Service's preparations for the 2024 election season and how the organization's Election Mail practices are evolving in the post-pandemic era.



In the 2020 general election, the Postal Service delivered 99.7 percent of ballots from voters to election officials within five days. In the 2022 midterms, the percentage was similarly impressive, at 99.8. How is the organization getting ready for November?

Marshall: The COVID-19 pandemic had a huge impact on how the public views voting by mail and this has had a significant impact on the number of Americans choosing mail-in voting. While Election Mail volume is small compared with our overall mail and packages, the spotlight of the 2020 election helped us understand that we needed a permanent team focused solely

JAMES HOLLAND

on our procedures and policies for handling Election Mail and our interactions with state boards of elections. That's why Postmaster General DeJoy created the Election and Government Mail Services team. We provide that permanent structure to ensure everyone at the Postal Service — from executive officers to maintenance staff — is informed and equipped to identify Election Mail and ensure every piece gets into our processing system quickly and securely.

Holland: The 2020 election was a big moment for us to reassure the country that the Postal Service is a safe, secure and trusted guardian of Election Mail. We demonstrated that we could fulfill our duty even during the crisis of a pandemic. As Adrienne mentioned, we now have a whole team dedicated to making sure we have the right policies and procedures in place for delivering Election Mail on time. We've also stepped up our game communicating with election officials across the country. For example, I spend a lot of my time

Winning Strategy

serving as a point of contact, answering election officials' questions about our policies and procedures, and educating their mailers on how to correctly label and process Election Mail.

Can you tell us more about the Election and Government Mail Services team's outreach to election officials?

Holland: We've learned a lot from past successes and have made changes to fine-tune our procedures and policies. By building stronger relationships with election boards and officials, we can tackle any challenges with greater efficiency and effectiveness, ensuring a smooth and reliable process for all involved. This collaborative approach allows us to anticipate their needs, tailor our services and deliver every ballot accurately and on time.

Marshall: Our continuous planning ensures a seamless process. As in previous years, we're going to implement our longstanding processes and procedures all year long, and our extraordinary measures closer to Election Day. These efforts may include additional pickups, extra deliveries and special sort plans on processing equipment to expedite and enhance ballot delivery. We've improved how we respond to queries from election officials to make us quicker and our solutions more targeted. These changes, combined with our experience and adaptability,

ensure we're ready to handle the unique challenges each election cycle brings.

Clearly, communication and consistency are critically important in ensuring a smooth process for delivering Election Mail. Could you discuss some other key factors that contribute to the successful delivery of ballots?

Holland: One of the most critical factors is early preparation. Thanks to a permanent team dedicated to election preparedness at the Postal Service, we were able to get a head start on our work for the 2022 and now the 2024 elections. Another crucial factor is attention to detail, such as encouraging specific design elements and accurate barcodes. These elements enable us to track ballots effectively within our system, avoiding issues downstream.

Marshall: In addition to what James said, I believe effective collaboration throughout our organization is crucial. There are committed employees at all levels in the Postal Service, including those who handle ballots at every stage, from collection and transportation to processing and delivery.

This includes members of the Election and Government Mail Services team, like James, who are present in every state to ensure smooth processes, clear procedures and effective communication from top to bottom.

ADRIENNE MARSHALL



We Go Everywhere!

ZIP Code™

60606

On the shore of Lake Michigan, Chicago is the third-largest city in the United States. In a skyline that includes some of America's tallest buildings, one of Chicago's most iconic structures is Willis Tower, a skyscraper in ZIP Code 60606.

Chicago, IL

When the last beam was placed in 1973, the tower became, for the next quarter-century, the world's tallest building. This marvel of engineering rises 1,450 feet above the streets (1,730 if you include the western antenna). Visitors can enjoy breathtaking views from the Skydeck windows on the 103rd floor or step onto The Ledge, a series of glass boxes jutting into the air — at once an unnerving and exhilarating experience.

Willis Group Holdings, a London-based insurance broker, acquired naming rights to the building in 2009, but people often refer to its original moniker, the Sears Tower. In its heyday, Sears occupied the lower half (the upper stories were rented out) and the 60606 ZIP Code was exclusive to the building.

Sears, once the country's biggest retailer, became a behemoth based largely on mail order sales — and postal delivery of catalogs



Look out below! The Ledge features glass viewing platforms that extend over 4 feet beyond the Willis Tower's Skydeck.

The last Big Book was published in 1993 amid the rise of internet marketing. Sears lost its leading status in that decade and ultimately filed for bankruptcy in 2018. Around a dozen stores remain open in the United States and Puerto Rico, and customers can shop online at Sears.com. Today, the Willis Tower has a retail complex called Catalog, a nod to the building's history.

and merchandise. Before online shopping, catalogs were the best way to find a broad selection of goods. The Sears catalog, dubbed the Big Book, grew to over 1,000 pages and strained the straps on letter carriers' satchels. The first Sears Christmas Book was delivered to mailboxes in 1933. Children would make their wish lists for Santa by circling items in its pages. The catalog was aptly renamed the Sears Wish Book in 1968.

Richard Warren Sears and Alvah Curtis Roebuck started selling watches and jewelry through a printed mailer in 1888. The publication had grown to 532 pages

by 1895 and featured a vast collection of products. Catalogs could be mailed at the third-class rate, which, at 1 cent per 2 ounces, was lower than the letter rate of 2 cents per ounce. With the introduction of Rural Free Delivery in 1896, the Sears catalog could be delivered directly to American homes.

Increased weight limits on what the Post Office Department could handle also boosted mail order sales. With the introduction of Parcel Post in 1913, the maximum package weight increased from 4 to 11 pounds and reached the current weight restriction, 70 pounds, in 1931.

Mail on the Move



A marketing brochure circa 1980 showed the Mailmobile in action.

The Sears Tower was the first building in the world to have a Mailmobile, nonpostal equipment developed in the private sector by Lear Siegler Inc. These automated interoffice mail carts debuted in the 1970s. Early versions were guided by low-frequency radio signals or chemical trails; later models used magnetic and then laser guidance. They would roam office halls at 1 mph, softly beeping. A malfunctioning Mailmobile could be frustrating, but people also found their electronic co-workers endearing and would decorate them or give them nicknames.

Enhancing the Customer Experience

By improving service, USPS aims to boost revenue, loyalty and repeat business.

It's a long-held business truism that the customer is always right, but how do you ensure the customer is always loyal?

As part of the Delivering for America plan, USPS is emphasizing the importance of delivering excellent customer service. By consistently providing customers with good experiences, the organization wants to drive repeat business and increase revenue.

“Customer experience has a direct impact on customer loyalty. If the

customer feels like they're having a good experience when they do business with you, they're more likely to stay loyal to your brand and increase their wallet share,” said Wendy Daniels, the Postal Service's director of customer experience and strategy.

This philosophy is at the heart of the USPS Customer Experience (CX) Vision Activation pilot, which will be rolled out at sorting and delivery centers (S&DCs) across the nation. As its name implies, the program is based on a central vision of establishing USPS as an organization with “a culture that empowers and trusts every employee to deliver efficient, reliable, empathetic service, resulting in every customer in America feeling valued and appreciated.”

Empowering employees

The Postal Service developed the CX Vision Activation program after more than a year of in-depth research and conversations with 300 dedicated employees throughout the organization.

The pilot focuses on providing excellent service at every touchpoint, whether it means delivering a package promptly;





on surveys that ask customers to rate their satisfaction with how issues are resolved? Are customer complaints decreasing? Are employees showing up each day, ready to work and eager to serve customers?

The organization is also placing a new premium on helping employees better meet customer needs through improved training and resolving issues with efficiency.

“The new CX Vision initiative reflects the goals of Delivering for America directly by empowering the Postal Service workforce,” said Marc McCrery, the organization’s vice president of customer experience.

“Data confirms that customer



reducing the amount of time customers spend in line at a retail counter; or offering friendly, knowledgeable service when someone calls a customer care center.

To measure the program’s effectiveness, USPS will look at a handful of metrics. Among them: Are scores increasing

“A culture that **empowers and trusts** every employee to deliver **efficient, reliable, empathetic service**, resulting in every customer in America feeling **valued and appreciated.**”

— The Customer Experience (CX) Vision



experience on the front end — as well as resolving issues on the back end — is absolutely vital. With that as our framework, we want to motivate our employees by empowering them, trusting in their ability to serve our customers and making the Postal Service a first-class place to work.”

The program in practice

This year, USPS will test the CX Vision Activation program at select S&DCs, allowing both retail and delivery employees to shape the



The CX Vision program focuses on providing excellent service at every touchpoint.

CX philosophy and bring it to the front line.

Managers and supervisors at the participating S&DCs will meet with employees during daily huddles, emphasizing the importance of the customer experience.

USPS also established a leaderboard that shows relevant data for each S&DC, encouraging them to work to achieve top performer status. Throughout the 90-day period, employees will receive recognition, and at the end of the pilot, the highest-achieving S&DC will receive a CX Vision Activation trophy.

According to Daniels, this phase underscores the importance of empowering employees and putting them in a customer-centric mindset.

“It will help managers and supervisors ask important questions like, ‘When there is a problem, how well do employees resolve the issue with efficiency and with leeway to do things immediately rather than going up the chain?’” she said.

Delivering for America means delivering for customers

McCrery believes the CX Vision will prove vital to the success of Delivering for America and its goal of improving the Postal Service’s financial sustainability.

For example, reducing customer complaints will be important to driving down USPS costs. “With the CX Vision, we’re saying: Let’s get it right the first time,” he said.

Similarly, boosting customer retention will help the Postal Service boost its bottom line.

“Delivering for America is the rallying cry right now for all the right reasons in terms of how it’s allowing us to remain a viable entity that serves the country not for the next five years or 15 years, but for the foreseeable future,” McCrery said. “I look at this as an important enabler of that and not a competing priority. It is absolutely one way to support the key tenets of Delivering for America.”



Mailin' it!

The Official Podcast of the United States Postal Service

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