

**Hearing Testimony - Postal Regulatory Commission  
USPS Branch and Station Initiative  
September 23, 2009**

Good morning/afternoon Madame Chair and Commissioners. I am Navy Commander Brian George, the commander of the Joint Military Postal Activity at the USPS Jersey City International Service Center representing the Military Postal Service Agency and the Department of Defense for today's comments on the USPS Branch and Station Optimization and Consolidation Initiative. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

We understand the business case to scrutinize operations within USPS during these fiscally challenging times and we have a unique perspective being both a significant customer and consumer of postal services and a partner with USPS in operating the Military Postal Service as an extension of the USPS overseas. From this perspective, we have three comments regarding the USPS Initiative:

First, reports we have received from the field show an active willingness on the part of local USPS postmasters to engage with military leaders regarding USPS closures that could impact military installations when requested. The military services appreciate this ability to participate and provide input in multiple locations. We believe this impacts the process and improves the quality of the decisions being made. We applaud this as a positive imperative for an initiative with such wide ranging impact and hope that all future endeavors by USPS include the Department of Defense and specifically the Military Postal Service Agency. Additionally, many DoD installation locations provide a benefit to USPS in that DoD subsidizes infrastructure and operating costs for USPS. These local nuances highlight the need for a partnership and input from stakeholders.

Our second comment is not so favorable in that despite the wide-ranging effect and collateral consequences of this initiative, it is a decentralized project, managed by USPS District Managers in a stove-piped environment. While holding final approval authority, USPS headquarters admittedly lacks oversight over this process and has been unable to communicate to MPSA detailed or accurate information regarding the status of specific local actions or an analysis of these proposed actions for strategic impact. MPSA actually provided information to USPS headquarters about specific locations where the military services had engaged with local postmasters. USPS was unaware that some of the initially considered bases were locations gaining more people under the military's Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process and closure would not be warranted. We believe that if USPS had coordinated and included MPSA in the discussion and planning of this initiative we could have saved USPS staffing time and money as well as coordinating some additional locations for consideration where we knew that the military

population was decreasing or joint consolidation efforts would support changing USPS operations.

Finally, USPS headquarters has provided no detailed criteria for useful analysis of their basis for closures. This poses questions of subjectivity and lack of strategic oversight over the process at large including its impact to the nation and the military establishment. We have been unable to assist with identifying objective candidates or work toward devising consolidation efforts that could prove beneficial to all parties. We are concerned that Postmasters and District Managers acting independently of their counterparts could negatively impact a greater geographical area than envisaged. USPS headquarters may not identify these gaps since these processes are run in silos. Published objective data for each potential closure inspires positive perception of the process and allows for independent analysis from interested parties.

Based on the above comments, MPSA believes the process for considering closure of USPS branches and stations which impacts military installations was flawed and is not consistent with its obligations to prompt, reliable, and efficient services to customers in all areas and all communities. With prior planning and coordination, taking into consideration additional factors such as base closure and realignments (BRAC) and internal DoD capabilities to develop joint basing consolidation and solutions, USPS has foregone a potential strategic partnering beneficial to both organizations.

Thank you for allowing us to provide comments on this USPS initiative. We strive to provide the best possible postal service to our servicemembers around the globe and at home. This concludes our comments.