

**Before the Postal Regulatory Commission  
PI 2008-3**

**Testimony of Laurie Timmons  
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USPS Northeast Area  
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**Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers  
Portsmouth, NH**

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, ladies and gentlemen.

My name is Laurie Timmons and I am the Manager of Marketing for the United States Postal Service's Northeast Area. I welcome you to Portsmouth, New Hampshire and thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today.

As the manager of Marketing for the Northeast Area, I oversee marketing and retail operations for the six New England states and Upstate New York. This area includes Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont and New York with the exception of the New York Metropolitan area. It extends as far north as the Canadian border and as far south as Stamford, Connecticut.

More than 60,000 Postal Service employees serve our customers in the Northeast Area bringing mail to 8.5 million delivery points and 1.6 million post office boxes six days a week. The only exception to our six day delivery schedule is Escourt Station, Maine, a town located in the wilderness near the Canadian border. There are no clear roads to this town from the United States so our carrier must travel through Canada to deliver the mail to Escourt Station. In this small rural town, we deliver mail to a 16 compartment collection box unit, two days a week.

Our employees process and deliver more than 20 billion pieces of mail annually for a diverse range of customers – from the residents of one of America's oldest cities – Boston, Massachusetts – to the French-speaking residents of the small rural town of Escourt, Maine. And, delivery service in the Northeast does not stop at the businesses and residents on dry land. We also travel on water and by air to provide service our customers.

Here in New Hampshire, the Wolfeboro NH Post Office uses a boat to deliver mail to summer residents on the islands in Lake Winnepesaukee.

In Maine, we also provide seasonal deliveries by mail boat to residents along the Belgrade Lakes. And, we make daily deliveries by ferry to the Casco Bay islands off the coast of Portland, Maine. We also deliver by ferry and by small planes to Monhegan, Vinalhaven, Northhaven and to many other islands throughout the Northeast Area's coastal towns. It sometimes takes more than an hour by ferry just to get to the islands for some of these deliveries.

Deliveries to the islands and other remote locations in the Northeast can be very challenging in blizzards and other rough weather especially during the winter months. These customers are dependent upon our services – sometimes for their very survival.

This past winter, New Hampshire had its snowiest winter in 135 years with a record snowfall of 113.4 inches. And in February of 2008, Parish, New York received more than 80 inches of snow in 36 hours. But it was Aroostook County, Maine that tested our ability to deliver when nearly 200 inches of snow contributed to a major flood in the Fort Kent area in early spring forcing the evacuation of more than 600 of the town's 4,233 residents.

Through it all – the snow, the rain, the floods and recently, the extreme heat – our employees delivered exceptional mail service to our customers. And our customers have recognized our efforts each and every year for more than 15 consecutive years by rating the Northeast Area number one in the nation in Customer Satisfaction as measured by the Gallup Organization.

We provide a number of convenient services to meet our customers' growing needs. These include a number of online services available at [usps.com](http://usps.com) including the ability to purchase stamps and other postal products, the ability to prepare postage paid packages and even to have those packages picked up by their letter carrier whether they live or work in a city or rural area.

Customers who visit the site can also print customized stamps featuring personal photos and purchase and send greeting cards, with or without gift cards, to almost anywhere in the world without ever leaving their home or office.

We added other conveniences in the community as well, including 120 Automated Postal Centers in our Post Office lobbies and 456 Contract Postal Units in local businesses. We offer Stamps on Consignment in thousands of supermarkets and other retailers and aggressively publicize the ability to purchase Stamps by Phone, by fax or by computer.

The Northeast Area is also very active in engaging employees to seek new revenue opportunities through a number of programs, like Business Connect, Customer Connect, and Rural Reach which allow postmasters, city carriers, and rural carriers to suggest new business prospects based upon their day to day contacts. The Business Development Teams work with these contacts to identify postal options that offer them the most efficient and cost effective shipping methods available. They also provide follow up to ensure that we are meeting or exceeding the customers' expectations.

Our efforts with the community do not stop there. We have some of the most active Postal Customer Councils in the nation. Postal Customer Councils are a partnership between postal officials and community members, including business owners, and serve to identify opportunities of mutual benefit. In the Northeast Area, 9 of our 22 PCCs received national recognition last year.

Our partnership with our customers is very important to us. One of the proudest moments in my own career was being selected as the PCC Person of the Year. I was nominated for the Award by Industry PCC leaders for the support that we provided to all the PCC Co-Chairs to ensure that their organizations and annual events are successful and valuable to our customers.

Some examples of the successful events the PCCs hosted include Area-wide Co-Chair meetings; certification classes for Mail Center Management and education seminars on pricing changes. Affordable, universal service is a top priority that is often discussed at these meetings.

Changes to the universal service obligation could affect access and delivery and it could impact the bottom line for thousands of businesses in our area.

The Postal Service's ability to fund its universal service obligation is due in large part to the postal monopoly on letters and the mailbox. As I mentioned earlier, the Northeast Area has 8.5 million delivery points – 2.5 million of which are rural deliveries like those to the residents of Aroostook County in Maine and the Adirondacks in Upstate New York. Potential changes to the postal monopoly could affect the Postal Service's ability to provide customers in rural locations with universal service at affordable prices.

As you have heard, we do what we must to keep all of our customers connected to the world whether it's delivering mail by land in postal vehicles, on the water using mail boats and ferries or by air in little puddle jumper planes. Keeping all of our customers connected is our mission and we do it with pride because we consider it our civic duty as employees of the United States Postal Service to do so.

Again, thank you for your time today and for visiting us here in beautiful Portsmouth, New Hampshire. I'll be happy to take any questions you may have.