

PRC FIELD HEARING

Before the Postal Regulatory Commission,
held at the Independence Civic Center, 6363
Selig Drive, Independence, Ohio, on Wednesday,
the 16th day of September, 2009, beginning at
1:06 p.m.

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POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION COMMISSIONERS:

Ruth Y. Goldway, Chairman

Nanci Langley, Vice Chairman

Mark Acton, Commissioner

Dan G. Blair, Commissioner

Tony Hammond, Commissioner

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1 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Good afternoon,
2 ladies and gentlemen. My name is Ruth Goldway.
3 I am the Chairman of the Postal Regulatory
4 Commission, based in Washington, D.C. I and my
5 fellow commissioners, who are here with me at
6 the table, welcome all of you here today.

7 It is a multifaceted pleasure to be
8 here in Independence, Ohio, for the first field
9 hearing in the Commission's review of the
10 Station and Branch Optimization Initiative of
11 the United States Postal Service.

12 Next week, on September 23rd, we will
13 hold a similar hearing in the Bronx, New York,
14 at O'Hare Hall at the Rose Hill Campus of
15 Fordham University.

16 I want to express the Commission's
17 special appreciation to the citizens of
18 Independence, and in particular to the staff
19 here at the Civic Center for their hospitality
20 and their welcoming use of this excellent
21 facility for today's hearing.

22 We are also honored to have a
23 representative from Independence, Mayor Kurtz's
24 office participating here as one of our
25 distinguished witnesses.

1 I would like to recognize the staff
2 members who are here from the offices of Senator
3 Voinovich, Senator Brown and Congressman
4 Kucinich. Could you raise your hands for us?
5 Thank you for your attendance.

6 I am sure that your constituents
7 appreciate the work that you do on their behalf;
8 but in case there is any doubt, we are here
9 today from Washington, in large part as a result
10 of your efforts to work with us in reaching out
11 to the citizens of Ohio.

12 The Commission is grateful for your
13 support in today's hearing, and particularly
14 grateful to the United States Senators and
15 Representatives that you work with.

16 The City of Independence is known as
17 a great place to live and work and raise a
18 family. You can easily see why when you look at
19 the center and at the public pools and the
20 recreation center and beautiful Elmwood Park.

21 I understand folks can even catch
22 four pound bass in the pond here. There is also
23 the impressive economic development that is
24 going on along Rockside Road corridor.

25 As a former mayor myself, I know how

1 important it is for a city to promote jobs and
2 actually expand the tax base, while improving
3 the quality of life and a sense of shared
4 identity.

5 Clearly, this community has fantastic
6 energy and a civic spirit. It is a perfect
7 example of the American Heartland, and I can't
8 think of a better place for the Commission to
9 hold its first field hearing on possible changes
10 in post office operations proposed by the Postal
11 Service and the impact that it could have on
12 local communities and on the mail system itself.

13 You may not be familiar with us, the
14 Postal Regulatory Commission. We are the
15 statutory regulator of the Postal Service. We
16 have responsibility to oversee the Postal
17 Service with regard to rate setting, universal
18 service and service standard performance, and
19 for the overall transparency and accountability
20 of the Postal Service to the American people.

21 Day-to-day operational management of
22 the Postal Service is the responsibility of the
23 Postmaster General and his management team.

24 On July 2nd of this year, the Postal
25 Service advised the Commission that it would be

1 looking at a group of 3,200, approximately
2 3,200, and later raised to approximately 3,600
3 postal stations and branches located in urban
4 and suburban areas nationwide for possible
5 closure.

6 In view of the implications this
7 action would have for service nationwide, the
8 Postal Service is required to seek an advisory
9 opinion from our Commission.

10 The Commission, therefore,
11 established document N2009-1 to provide a public
12 hearing on the Postal Service's proposal and the
13 underlying issues and details of the proposal.

14 This field hearing is being held to
15 promote greater public input into the process
16 and the Commission's deliberations, as we
17 formulate our advisory opinion.

18 Currently, the Postal Service has
19 announced a list of over 400 stations and
20 branches, including 32 currently on the list for
21 Ohio. From among the 3,600 that qualify for
22 further analysis, there is potential for other
23 offices to be added to this list in the future.

24 The Postal Service explains that it
25 is taking action to close post offices because

1 it has experienced historic declines in mail
2 volume, largely due to the recession, and it is
3 facing significant financial losses this year
4 and into the foreseeable future.

5 The Postal Service has the
6 responsibility to serve every citizen, household
7 and business throughout America, and it remains
8 far and away the world's largest mail service
9 provider, with expected mail volume of about 175
10 billion pieces this year.

11 This hearing provides a critical
12 forum for public input as the Postal Service
13 seeks, under difficult circumstances, to find a
14 right balance between cost control and adequate
15 service.

16 I want to emphasize the importance of
17 the public scrutiny in the Commission that -- I
18 want to emphasize the importance that the public
19 scrutiny that the Commission provides in this
20 review already, as a result of our inquiries,
21 press coverage and inquiries by the public, the
22 Postal Service has clarified its proposed plans.

23 It has reduced the first level of
24 closure reviews from over 700 to over 400. And
25 here in Ohio, just the other day, it took 12

1 offices that were on the initial list off the
2 list, including the one here in Independence.

3 Citizen participation is the
4 cornerstone of any good governmental regulatory
5 program, and I am pleased to see that the Postal
6 Service has been responsive to the level of
7 community interest so far.

8 The testimony provided by our
9 witnesses today will help educate and inform the
10 Commission as we continue our study of the
11 Postal Service's proposal, and it will help the
12 Postal Service directly as well.

13 I sincerely appreciate the witnesses'
14 willingness to be here today to add to the
15 Commission's record on this important issue.

16 I want to note that following our
17 formal testimony, anyone in the audience who is
18 interested in making a statement may do so. We
19 ask that you keep your remarks to no more than
20 three minutes.

21 I would like now to introduce the
22 witnesses for our first panel. After our first
23 panel, the commissioners will ask questions, so
24 we will ask our panelists to proceed directly
25 and then we will hold questions until after you

1 have completed your statements.

2 First we have Ron White, who is
3 representing Mayor George Kurtz. Thank you.

4 Then we have Thomas Lipker, the
5 Customer Service Analyst at the Northern Ohio
6 District of the U.S. Postal Service.

7 Next is Steve Laserson, Vice
8 President of the Greetings Cards at Americas --
9 Vice President of Greetings Cards and America --
10 American Greetings.

11 **MR. LASERSON:** American Greetings.

12 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Greeting Cards and
13 American Greetings, which is headquartered in
14 Cleveland. And Steve is also the President of
15 the Greeting Card Association.

16 We are also pleased to have a member
17 of the Direct Marketing Association, Louis
18 Giesler, who is President of AmeriMark Direct,
19 also located in Cleveland.

20 Rounding out the first panel, we were
21 to have had Wayne Benos, who is the Past
22 President of the Cuyahoga Valley Chamber of
23 Commerce. Unfortunately, he was unable to
24 appear today due to a last-minute scheduling
25 conflict. But he has submitted written

1 testimony, which we will make part of the
2 official hearing record today.

3 So with that introduction, I would
4 like to begin with Mr. Ron White. Thank you for
5 being here.

6 **MR. WHITE:** You are very
7 welcome. And just for the record, that is
8 Gregory Kurtz, not George.

9 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Oh.

10 **MR. WHITE:** Just so that is
11 corrected in the record.

12 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Thank you.

13 **MR. WHITE:** And I also served
14 as a board member of the Chamber of Commerce.
15 And even though Wayne is not here, I probably
16 reflect some of those feelings and comments that
17 he may have made in his statements.

18 We welcome you. We certainly enjoy
19 having you here and thank you very much, Chair
20 Goldway and commissioners for coming and
21 offering this unique and unprecedented
22 opportunity for a meeting of the commissioners
23 in the field.

24 I understand this is one of the
25 first, if not the first field meeting. So I

1 think that is commendable, and we thank you very
2 much for choosing Independence to have one of
3 those.

4 Number one, this is an extremely
5 important issue. And I think you have outlined
6 that very well and your presence here certainly
7 signifies that it is an important issue, not
8 only to the country, to our community and to our
9 region, and so we are very grateful of having
10 been notified last week that our local branch
11 will not be affected initially.

12 We know that that doesn't take us off
13 the table forever. But at least for now, we can
14 continue to enjoy the retail and services at a
15 close-hand basis. So we appreciate that very
16 much. And we hope we will be able to continue
17 that for some time.

18 I do want to extend a thank you to a
19 couple of different people. You have mentioned,
20 Chair, that a letter of support was given to us
21 from Representative Dennis Kucinich, who
22 represents this region.

23 A local contiguous community to us,
24 Mayor Jack Bacci of Cuyahoga Heights enacted
25 some legislation supporting our effort to retain

1 our branch, and we thank him as a neighboring
2 community. And his village council.

3 State Representative Josh Mandel, the
4 State of Ohio.

5 Senator Sherrod Brown and Senator
6 Voinovich, we appreciate their attention to this
7 and helping in this effort.

8 Early in July of 2009, we became
9 aware that the Independence Post Office branch
10 was one of 16 potential closures in the greater
11 Cleveland area.

12 We understand the dire financial
13 situation that the United States Postal System
14 is facing and are aware that something has to
15 give in order to ensure the survival of the
16 United States Postal Service.

17 We are grateful that you have taken
18 the time to come to our city and hear firsthand
19 how these closures will affect not only the
20 residents of our community, but also our
21 business residents and their customers, not only
22 in our community, but those also in surrounding
23 communities and within the region, Cuyahoga
24 Heights, Brooklyn Heights, the Village of Valley
25 View, Walton Hills, Brecksville, Seven Hills as

1 well.

2 The Independence Branch of the U.S.
3 Postal Service provides a critical service for
4 7,000 residents within the City of Independence,
5 and in addition, 25,000 workers who come here
6 every day, and that is about 1,300-plus
7 businesses that come and do their work and
8 provide us with excellent revenues, of course,
9 to produce services for our residents.

10 The branch that was to have closed
11 would impact us in a dramatic way. And I think
12 our businesses would feel that impact as well,
13 and it would reach farther than just our
14 boundaries, as you understand, I am sure.

15 And would have actually resulted in a
16 further decline of the use, and would have
17 resulted in a further decline of the use of the
18 Postal System, I believe, as a result of not
19 being as accessible.

20 So we want to keep Independence and
21 all of our communities, any community, as an
22 attractive and viable candidate for growing
23 families and businesses by offering accessible
24 and convenient services.

25 But at this time, we have received a

1 reprieve, and for that we are very grateful.

2 Since we are one of the fortunate
3 communities to retain our branch, I would like
4 at this time to turn over the microphone to the
5 other witnesses and hear their concerns as well,
6 and more so those who remain in limbo.

7 Again, I would like to thank the
8 commissioners, Chair. We are very appreciative
9 of the process of holding the Postal Regulatory
10 Commission hearing here and taking into
11 consideration all of our concerns and ensuring
12 the standards and services of the Postal Service
13 to our community as well as our neighboring
14 communities.

15 So, again, thank you, and welcome to
16 the community. If there is anything else we can
17 do to make your stay here more comfortable, let
18 us know.

19 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Thank you,
20 Mr. White. That was very useful and very
21 specific.

22 Our next witness is Thomas Lipker.

23 If I am pronouncing things
24 incorrectly, please do correct me for the
25 record.

1 **MR. LIPKER:** No, you are just
2 fine. My name is Thomas Lipker. I am a
3 Customer Service Analyst for the United States
4 Postal Service in the Northern Ohio District
5 office.

6 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** I think you might
7 want to move the microphone down a little.

8 **MR. LIPKER:** How is that? Is
9 that better?

10 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** That's better.

11 **MR. LIPKER:** My name is Thomas
12 Lipker. I am a Customer Service Analyst for the
13 United States Postal Service, the Northern Ohio
14 District office, 2200 Orange Avenue, Cleveland,
15 Ohio 44101.

16 My principal responsibilities in that
17 position for the past ten years has been as a
18 rural delivery analyst and discontinuance review
19 coordinator, both of which require extensive
20 interaction with customers.

21 I have provided the Commission with a
22 detailed written statement for the record. I
23 would like to summarize some of those points
24 before taking any questions you may have.

25 The service area of the Northern Ohio

1 District consists of the three digit ZIP code
2 range from 439 to 449. The District provides
3 retail and delivery service to approximately 5
4 million customers and 2.2 million delivery
5 points through a network of post offices
6 supported by 466 stations and branches.

7 I understand that the Postal
8 Regulatory Commission is considering a Postal
9 Service request for an advisory opinion
10 regarding the current Station and Branch
11 Optimization and Consolidation Initiative.

12 Of the 466 postal stations and
13 branches in the Northern Ohio District, as of
14 September 2nd, 28 were identified as candidates
15 for discontinuance studies as a part of that
16 Initiative. I am not in a position today to
17 address the future status of any of those
18 stations and branches beyond the fact that just
19 16 remain the subject of active review.

20 The Postal Service has provided -- or
21 excuse me.

22 The Postal Service has a public input
23 process for stations and branches that requires
24 us to solicit and consider local customers'
25 input before making any recommendation regarding

1 the closure of a station or branch.

2 In all cases, we are required to post
3 notices in the lobbies of those stations that
4 inform customers of the opportunity either to
5 complete a questionnaire or to participate in a
6 public meeting. When input is solicited through
7 a questionnaire, the questionnaires are
8 available for pickup in the retail lobby for at
9 least ten days. If there is a public meeting,
10 any notice about the meeting must be posted for
11 at least ten days before the scheduled date.

12 Input from delivery customers is also
13 solicited. And any post office box customers at
14 that station or branch are individually notified
15 of a possible change and encouraged to comment.
16 Fare delivery customers are also provided notice
17 via a letter or through local newspapers
18 soliciting their input.

19 The discontinuance study process
20 entails informing customers of changes being
21 considered while soliciting their feedback.

22 In the Northern Ohio District, we
23 publicly identified the 28 candidate stations
24 and branches that were being considered for
25 discontinuance and asked customers to comment.

1 I am not familiar with the
2 Commission's advisory oversight process, as it
3 relates to the Station and Branch Optimization
4 and Consolidation Initiative. Or otherwise.
5 But I am conversant with the Postal Service
6 station and branch discontinuance review process
7 that is being applied. I can illustrate that
8 process for the Commission's benefit by
9 summarizing how it was applied to the recent
10 discontinuance of the Rolling Acres Mall Finance
11 Unit in Akron.

12 Before doing so, I will share with
13 you a brief overview of how the Rolling Acres
14 Finance Unit came into being and the changes
15 over time that led to consideration of the
16 discontinuance.

17 In response to continued increases in
18 mail volume and demand in the late 1990s for
19 access to traditional retail counters, the
20 Northern Ohio District established a classified
21 retail unit at the Rolling Acres Mall, which was
22 a thriving retail center. At the time, Akron
23 was served by the Kenmore Post Office, the Maple
24 Valley Post Office and the Akron Main Post
25 Office.

1 The mall seemed like a logical place
2 to extend postal retail. It was anchored by
3 major department stores and housed national
4 chain stores.

5 The Postal Service entered into a
6 five-year lease for a retail unit, was opened
7 originally 40 hours or more weekly. The lease
8 was renewed in 2002 for another five years.

9 By the time it was studied for
10 discontinuance, it was open for business from
11 1:15 p.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

12 Beginning in 2006, the Northern Ohio
13 District applied the Postal Handbook PO-101
14 review process to determine whether to continue
15 operating the Rolling Acres Finance Unit beyond
16 the 2007 lease termination date.

17 Analysis of the workload showed a 50
18 percent decline in the revenue per work hour
19 from 2003 through 2006, even after the operation
20 hours were reduced substantially.

21 These trends were consistent with an
22 apparent decline in the mall's fortunes as many
23 retail merchants either ceased operations or
24 relocated. In 2006, the mall was in a serious
25 decline as a retail magnet, with a 67 percent

1 vacancy rate.

2 Retail postal operations at nearby
3 locations were easily capable of absorbing the
4 declining Rolling Acres postal retail traffic.

5 Beginning October 4th, 2006, we made
6 questionnaires and comment forms available for
7 pickup at the finance station and solicited
8 responses from walk-in retail customers. One
9 hundred questionnaires were distributed, a high
10 number given the absence of any delivery
11 customers serviced by the unit.

12 We collected 40 responses, where
13 comments were generally complimentary of the
14 Finance Unit's retail staff and expressed a
15 preference for continued access to a retail
16 counter at that location.

17 A public meeting was scheduled for
18 Friday, December 8th, 2006, in the Community
19 Room at the Rolling Acres Mall. On November
20 17th, 2006, we posted a public notice regarding
21 that meeting in the Finance Unit lobby and sent
22 letters to the mayor of Akron, the congressman
23 in whose district the station was located, the
24 American Postal Workers Union Local president,
25 as well as the manager of the Rolling Acres

1 Mall, so that other mall tenants and visitors
2 could be notified.

3 In all of our notices, we informed
4 customers of the reasons for the discontinuance
5 proposal. The notices also indicated the
6 availability of three alternative Postal Service
7 postal retail locations and their Monday through
8 Saturday operating hours, including the Kenmore
9 Post Office, 1.1 miles away, as well as the
10 Maple Valley and Barberton Post Offices.

11 The decision to hold the public
12 meeting at 1 p.m. on Friday, December 8th was
13 based on the expectation that we could maximize
14 convenience to both tenants and mall customers.
15 However, the meeting only attracted one
16 attendee, the Rolling Acres Mall manager.

17 After the meeting, postal
18 representatives visited a mall tenant who had
19 completed a questionnaire indicating a need to
20 accommodate the mailing needs of an Internet
21 business.

22 We responded to his concerns by
23 demonstrating how conveniently the online USPS
24 shipping tool called Click-N-Ship could produce
25 an address mailing label with prepaid postage

1 and how the free pickup would be made when a
2 carrier delivered to his store.

3 After considering all of the
4 information gathered during the study, the
5 Northern Ohio District formally proposed to
6 Headquarters on January 2nd, 2007, that the
7 Rolling Acres Finance Unit be discontinued.

8 Headquarters issued its decision on
9 April 30th, 2007, approving the discontinuance.
10 We promptly posted a notice in the retail lobby
11 and sent letters to the mayor of Akron, the City
12 Council president, the congressman -- the
13 congresswoman whose district included Rolling
14 Acres, the Rolling Acres Mall, the American
15 Postal Workers Union Local and the Rolling Acres
16 Mall retail unit customers.

17 A media advisory was released on May
18 24th, 2006, informing the local print and
19 television news broadcast units about the
20 closure of the Rolling Acres Mall Finance Unit,
21 effective July 27th, 2007, and the continued
22 availability of service at nearby postal retail
23 units.

24 We have since monitored the customer
25 service at the Kenmore, Maple Valley and

1 Barberton Post Offices. We have not seen any
2 uptick in customer complaints regarding these
3 offices.

4 I should note that commercial
5 operation of the Rolling Acres Mall ceased
6 altogether in 2008.

7 I thank you for the opportunity to
8 provide this information and will try to answer
9 your questions. If I am not the right person to
10 provide an answer, I will work with the Postal
11 Council to ensure the Commission gets a response
12 for the record. Thank you.

13 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Thank you,
14 Mr. Lipker.

15 **MR. LIPKER:** Thank you.

16 **MR. LASERSON:** Good afternoon.

17 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** This is Mr. Steve
18 Laserson.

19 **MR. LASERSON:** Yes, I am Steve
20 Laserson. I am employed as Vice President of
21 Greetings Cards at American Greetings here
22 locally, and I am currently serving as the
23 President of the Greeting Card Association.

24 As the Commission knows, the GCA is
25 the only trade association representing the

1 citizen mail user, which is, of course, our
2 industry's ultimate customer.

3 The Commission also is well aware
4 that greeting cards are a strategically
5 important and significant part of the mail
6 stream.

7 Approximately 3.65 billion cards were
8 mailed in fiscal 2008, a figure that represents
9 about half of all cards sold. This was a
10 notable increase of 2.3 percent over fiscal
11 2007, at a time when single-piece first-class
12 letters overall declined 8 percent.

13 As a starting point for my remarks,
14 let me first provide a brief recap of the goals
15 I have for today.

16 First, the GCA asks that the
17 Commission fully consider the needs of the
18 citizen mailer in arriving at its advisory
19 opinion, because keeping the citizen mailer
20 engaged in the mail is crucial to the interest
21 of all mail users and to the Postal Service
22 itself.

23 Next we'll ask that you consider the
24 issues before the Commission today in the
25 context of all of the cost savings initiatives

1 that the Postal Service has taken or may take in
2 the near future.

3 Considering these initiatives on a
4 one-off basis would result in missing the
5 potential cumulative impact that could
6 provide -- that could prove detrimental to the
7 citizen mail user, and ultimately, the Postal
8 Service.

9 Further, we'll emphasize that both
10 cost and ease of use are important to citizen
11 mailers, and both must be considered if we hope
12 to keep mailers attuned to using the mail. It
13 is clear that the ease of use consideration is
14 more significant today than it has been
15 historically, simply because most household
16 mailers now have alternatives channels for
17 transactions that would otherwise be done by
18 mail.

19 Finally, I will point out some of the
20 ways in which the citizen mailer is
21 disproportionately at risk when deductions
22 affect either the last mile or the first mile of
23 Postal Service.

24 Throughout my comments, please keep
25 in mind that in these difficult times for the

1 Postal Service, the GCA's number one goal is to
2 keep the citizen mailer fully engaged in the
3 mail, both as a sender and a recipient, for the
4 ultimate benefit of the Postal Service and all
5 of its customers.

6 The Postal Service has compiled an
7 admirable record of cost reduction, and should
8 continue to streamline in ways that save more
9 costs than they risk in terms of customer
10 engagement. We have seen plenty of evidence
11 that Postal Service managers, like their
12 counterparts in the private sector, do
13 understand that volume and revenue must be
14 maintained even while operating costs are being
15 cut.

16 In the case of the citizen mailer,
17 the long-term impact of reduced confidence in or
18 engagement with the mail is a possibility that
19 we cannot lose sight of in pursuit of short-term
20 savings.

21 In particular, the Postal Service,
22 and the Commission, in arriving at its opinion
23 in this case, must consider that reduced costs
24 will not help if citizen mailers leave the
25 system because it has become too difficult or

1 inconvenient to use.

2 In pursuing this theme, I will need
3 to reach somewhat beyond the boundaries of this
4 specific case, because a broad range of Postal
5 Service programs will affect the ease of use
6 equation. It is crucial that we consider the
7 potential impact of these programs, again, in
8 total, not just individually.

9 The key factor in this equation is
10 that the citizen mailer is disproportionately at
11 risk from cuts in what we'll call the first mile
12 and last mile of Postal Service.

13 By "first mile," I mean the process
14 of entering mail into the system. For example,
15 the prospect of a five- rather than six-day
16 delivery could have a meaningfully negative
17 impact on a householder's ability to deposit
18 mail into the system.

19 Blue collection boxes have been
20 disappearing from neighborhoods for some years.
21 The loss of these boxes in residential areas
22 forces the citizen mailer to change his or her
23 postal operations. One obvious adaptation is to
24 leave mail for carrier pickup, but the potential
25 loss of Saturday's carrier pickup makes that

1 option less viable as well.

2 When we consider the large number of
3 two-wage-earner families away from home during
4 the bulk of the workweek, it seems reasonable to
5 conclude that they may rely heavily on Saturday,
6 often Saturday morning, as the time to pay
7 bills, answer letters or send cards.

8 We must consider the combined impact
9 of the loss of Saturday carrier pickup and the
10 disappearance of corner collection boxes along
11 with the potential closure of a neighborhood
12 post office.

13 No doubt we and others can and will
14 think of other similar issues that clearly need
15 further study. My point is that while each of
16 these cost-reduction programs may make good
17 sense by itself, the combined effect will
18 materially reduce citizen mailers' access to the
19 postal system and push them towards available
20 alternatives.

21 Large businesses receiving remittance
22 mail, on the other hand, do not depend on
23 carrier or retail offices, and we understand
24 that if Saturday delivery is ended, Saturday
25 remittance mail pickup will still be available.

1 So it is the citizen mailer who most
2 significantly relies on the retail network and
3 the carrier that will feel the greatest impact.

4 In sum, the Greeting Card Association
5 urges the Commission to give full consideration
6 to the impact upon the households of America by
7 the Initiative now before you.

8 We urge you to examine it in light of
9 how it may interact with other existing
10 potential Postal Service reductions that affect
11 the first mile and/or last mile of service.

12 Could these programs, taken together,
13 have a cumulative impact in degrading customer
14 access, thereby eroding citizen mailers'
15 engagement with the mail? And how would such
16 disengagement impact the effectiveness of
17 advertising or charitable-appeal mail?

18 Precisely because the answers to
19 these questions are unknown, we rely on the
20 Commission to build a truly informed record so
21 that it can estimate the net worth of the
22 Initiative in the long run and so that the
23 Postal Service's own decisions are as sound as
24 possible. Thank you.

25 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Thank you,

1 Mr. Laserson. And now we have Mr. Giesler.

2 **MR. GIESLER:** Chairman Goldway, I
3 am Louis Giesler, President of AmeriMark Direct.
4 Welcome to Cleveland, and thank you for taking
5 the time to come and talk to us about the U.S.
6 Postal Service.

7 AmeriMark Direct, based in Cleveland,
8 along with our sister company, Dr. Leonard's
9 Healthcare, employ 1,200 people and sell our
10 merchandise primarily through ten different
11 catalogs.

12 The U.S. Postal Service is our single
13 most important business partner, delivering over
14 200 million catalogs and 11 million packages on
15 our behalf each year. Our business is highly
16 dependent on a viable Postal Service providing
17 affordable and efficient nationwide service.

18 Everyone knows these are trying times
19 for our economy, for every segment of our
20 economy. The Postal Service, which receives no
21 tax revenue and relies on postage paid by
22 consumers and corporations, mailers big and
23 small, has not been spared.

24 While the Service has successfully
25 reduced costs in recent years, a 25 percent

1 decline in mail volume over the past two years,
2 along with the unique requirement that it fully
3 pre-fund the health insurance benefits of future
4 retirees, places the Service in a very
5 precarious financial situation. This has led to
6 a projected \$7 billion shortfall for the fiscal
7 year ending September 30th.

8 Consequently, the Service is
9 considering a range of proposals aimed at
10 additional cost reductions, including a plan to
11 consolidate the operations of some retail
12 stations into nearby facilities.

13 The concerns of communities remaining
14 on the consolidation list, including the 16 in
15 the Cleveland area, are understandable. Losses
16 of jobs, the impact on community identity and
17 customer access to postal services are all
18 legitimate and important concerns.

19 These types of concerns are not
20 foreign to those of us living in Cleveland.
21 Hardly a week goes by without a lead story in
22 "The Plain Dealer" focusing on a local business
23 announcing decreases in sales, corporate losses,
24 reductions in workforce or the closure of
25 factories and facilities.

1 Our local and county governments have
2 had to freeze wages, reduce services and
3 programs, increase fees and lay off employees.

4 Finally, meaningful discussions about
5 consolidation and regionalism, as a way of
6 making Government more efficient, are being held
7 in our community.

8 The Catholic Diocese of Cleveland
9 announced that it is closing more than 50
10 churches as part of a consolidation and
11 reconfiguration effort. This is being driven in
12 large part by population shifts and financial
13 struggles.

14 A common question being asked is: If
15 we can't afford our current operations or the
16 current level of service, is there a less
17 costly, reasonable alternative that still meets
18 the needs of our shareholders and/or our
19 customers, our constituents or our congregants?

20 I believe postal officials are asking
21 themselves similar questions. How can we best
22 meet the needs of our customers, providing
23 prompt, reliable and efficient postal services
24 to all customers in a world of shrinking volume
25 and revenue? Does a consolidation of some

1 retail operations help us achieve that goal?

2 In most, if not all cases, I believe
3 the answer to the consolidation question should
4 be yes. This thinking is due primarily to the
5 evolution of the Service's retail operations in
6 recent years.

7 In addition to the nearly 37,000
8 Postal Service retail facilities, we can now
9 purchase stamps and/or selected postal services
10 online, through the mail, at about 56,000
11 non-USPS retail locations or at over 18,000
12 ATMs. We can arrange for parcels to be picked
13 up at our home or business.

14 And we now have the Forever Stamp,
15 which means we no longer have to wait in line to
16 purchase makeup postage when rates change.

17 Given the reductions in the number of
18 stations still under consideration for
19 consolidation, I believe the Service is taking
20 seriously its review criteria for this
21 initiative, focusing on the needs of the
22 affected consumers in the communities.

23 Those who expect the Postal Service
24 to successfully balance our needs and
25 expectations with service and budgetary

1 constraints in this world of decreasing mail
2 volumes must allow the Postal Service the
3 latitude to implement the changes necessary to
4 achieve success.

5 In closing, a strong Postal Service
6 is important to all of us. The challenges of
7 both shrinking volume and revenue are very real,
8 significant and a part of the Service's future.

9 I believe proposals like the one to
10 consolidate operations and reduce costs are
11 necessary if we expect the Service to remain
12 financially viable and continue serving its
13 customers and communities in the future.

14 Thanks again for coming to Cleveland.
15 I would be happy to answer any questions you
16 have.

17 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Thank you,
18 gentlemen. What I would like to do before we
19 take questions is take this opportunity to
20 introduce my fellow commissioners and ask them
21 to offer any introductory remarks that they
22 would like. I will begin all the way on my left
23 with Commissioner Tony Hammond.

24 **MR. HAMMOND:** Do I need that mike
25 or can I just --

1 everyone. I am Dan Blair. I am a commissioner
2 with the Postal Regulatory Commission.

3 Again, I want to welcome our first
4 panel, as well as the second panel that will be
5 following you here today. I appreciate the kind
6 folks here in Independence, Ohio, for hosting us
7 as well.

8 Commissioner Hammond is from
9 Missouri, so am I. We grew up probably about
10 nine miles from one another. We have a very
11 important Independence, Missouri, too, so I am
12 glad to be able to be at the sister city of
13 Independence, Missouri, in Independence, Ohio.

14 This is a very important role for the
15 Commission to play in issuing what is called an
16 advisory opinion or recommendations to the
17 Postal Service for the procedures they are going
18 to follow in closing these stations and
19 branches. And the input that our witnesses have
20 today will help us as we go through the process
21 in formulating what our recommendations are
22 going to be.

23 I will be interested to question the
24 witnesses individually, but I just want to throw
25 out some concepts that I am interested in.

1 And the first one is that the Postal
2 Service distinguishes between post offices and
3 stations and branches. And apart from
4 Mr. Lipker, does that mean anything to our
5 witnesses today? Is this just merely an
6 administrative distinction, or is this a
7 real-life distinction? And I would like to hear
8 what your thoughts would be today on that.

9 I am also looking at if you can help
10 the Commission formulate its opinion, because it
11 is a balancing act. We have heard how the
12 Postal Service is losing billions of dollars
13 this year, it's the economy, but it is also
14 because people are using the mail differently
15 than they were 5, 10, 15, 20 years ago.

16 But also, these stations and branches
17 and post offices represent the face of not only
18 the Postal Service, but of the Federal
19 Government as well. And it is important that we
20 provide citizens this kind of access.

21 So as we are trying to thread this
22 needle here at the Commission, any advice or
23 concepts you think we need to consider would be
24 most helpful.

25 I will be looking forward to

1 questioning the witnesses later, but I
2 appreciate, again, your participation today.
3 Hearing from you and getting outside of
4 Washington helps the Commission present a more
5 balanced approach in our public service task.
6 So thank you very much.

7 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Commissioner Mark
8 Acton.

9 **MR. ACTON:** Thank you, Madam
10 Chairman. I just want to wish everyone a
11 Prosperous National Postal Customer Council Day,
12 and thank you for your attendance.

13 There was some news from our staff
14 that the House this morning, the House of
15 Representatives, passed legislative relief for
16 the unfunded healthcare liabilities, so perhaps
17 some help is on the way soon. Thanks again for
18 your time and testimony.

19 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Vice Chairman Nanci
20 Langley.

21 **MS. LANGLEY:** Thank you so much.
22 My colleagues have really said it all, but we
23 are delighted to be here. I am originally from
24 Hawaii, so I understand the beauty of the sea,
25 but I have spent some time along Lake Erie, and

1 it is absolutely fantastic.

2 Commissioner Blair mentioned the
3 Postal Service being the face of the Federal
4 Government, and I think communities are
5 strengthened by the existence of postal
6 facilities within localities, and the shared
7 sense of identity is very important.

8 Mr. Laserson mentioned there could be
9 a cumulative effect if the Postal Service starts
10 discontinuing branches, cutting back service,
11 and there is just the change in how we
12 communicate with one another.

13 So I think having the hearing and
14 being able to get outside of Washington and
15 really hear from all of you is important to us
16 to better understand how the Postal Service is
17 viewed outside of the structure of Washington,
18 D.C. So thank you so much.

19 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Thank you. Thank
20 you, Commissioners.

21 I think it might be best to begin
22 with the general question that Commissioner
23 Blair proposed, and perhaps ask all of you, what
24 do you see as the difference between station and
25 branch and the post office, or do you see a

1 difference? Or do you think your customers,
2 constituents see a difference? I think that is
3 a very good place for us to begin and something
4 that I think all of you can address. So if you
5 would, please.

6 **MR. GIESLER:** Sure, I will start.

7 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Mr. Giesler, do you
8 want to begin?

9 **MR. GIESLER:** I personally could
10 not define the difference between a station and
11 a branch as a business mailer.

12 What I tend to experience when we are
13 working with the Postal Service is that we are
14 often directed down to the Orange facility,
15 which I am guessing is a station, because
16 they've got the size to handle what we want to
17 do. We do very little transaction with our
18 branch in our local community of Middleburg
19 Heights.

20 But I couldn't define it, but my
21 sense is it's a difference in size and what they
22 are trying to handle.

23 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Thank you.

24 Mr. Laserson?

25 **MR. LASERSON:** Similarly, I am

1 aware of the distinction. I have actually heard
2 it articulated a couple times and still could
3 probably not repeat it to you. I know it's
4 subtle, and I think it's so subtle that the
5 average user, certainly individual citizen user
6 and perhaps business user probably isn't fully
7 aware, other than that they can get some things
8 done at one place, some things at the other, and
9 they don't really know why.

10 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Mr. Lipker.

11 **MR. LIPKER:** Being from the
12 Postal Service, we understand a station and a
13 branch and a post office. A station and a
14 branch falls under a level 24 Postmaster, which
15 we see in the City of Cleveland, Akron, Canton,
16 Youngstown, Mansfield. A post office falls
17 under the individual postmasters in the field.

18 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** But the services
19 provided to an individual customer at a station
20 and a branch, are they the same as the services
21 provided to an individual customer at a post
22 office?

23 **MR. LIPKER:** It's the same
24 service between a station, a branch and a post
25 office, yes.

1 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** So the individual
2 citizen would not really know the difference
3 between a station --

4 **MR. LIPKER:** If I was not
5 postal, I probably would not know the difference
6 also.

7 **MR. WHITE:** I am so glad that
8 you came before me. Now I don't have to answer
9 that question.

10 Other than, I would say, if there was
11 a distinction of those three designations, I
12 would say the main thing is what the street
13 customer, the business customer or resident
14 customer sees as to the retail services that are
15 provided and how they access the system. That
16 would be, to me, if there was a distinction,
17 which it doesn't appear there are, that would be
18 the main thing. Can I access at any point
19 within the system what I need to have?

20 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Are there -- if I
21 can ask just a follow-up from Mr. Lipker,
22 perhaps he can answer that. Is there a
23 difference between a post office and a contract
24 postal unit at what we call a CPU in terms of
25 the services that an average citizen gets?

1 **MR. LIPKER:** I am not 100
2 percent sure on that answer, but they do still
3 provide retail services to the local
4 communities.

5 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Okay. Thank you
6 for addressing that.

7 Commissioner Blair, do you want to
8 follow up with your second line of questions?

9 **MR. BLAIR:** Sure. Thank you
10 very much, Chairman Goldway. I appreciate this
11 very much.

12 This is not a scientific survey, but
13 I always find it interesting --

14 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Wait.

15 **MR. BLAIR:** Thank you. This
16 isn't intended to be a scientific survey in any
17 way, but I always find it helpful for anecdotal
18 purposes just to get a sense of how the
19 witnesses use the mail. Mr. Lipker, this isn't
20 necessarily for you, but I would -- maybe it is
21 for you. And I will be honest as well if you
22 want to ask me the same questions.

23 One of the reasons that we hear that
24 the Postal Service is in such trouble is because
25 people are using the mail differently today.

1 You have online bill paying. The electronic
2 diversions in the mail has eaten away its
3 revenues.

4 I would just like to hear from our
5 witnesses today, how many of you pay your bills
6 over the Internet?

7 **MR. WHITE:** If I may indulge
8 the commissioners, I did want -- I would be
9 remiss if I didn't recognize our local branch
10 manager, Lil McClain. Lil was very helpful in
11 communicating through this process up to the
12 point we were announced we were no longer on the
13 list. So thank you, Lil.

14 I personally probably am a 50
15 percent. I 50 percent use the Internet, either
16 for e-mail or for bill paying or for checking
17 the balance of my checking account or doing
18 those kind of things, and then I pay still some
19 of my bills by using the Postal Service.

20 So I am somewhat of a convert into
21 the more electronic means by which I do business
22 personally. And certainly, even professionally
23 within the Government in my occupation, I use
24 electronic means as much as possible.

25 **MR. BLAIR:** When was the last

1 time you were in a post office?

2 **MR. WHITE:** Well, because I
3 have such an affinity for our post office, I am
4 there quite frequently and I do go and certainly
5 am there. I would say probably last week,
6 within every few days, I am probably there
7 either just to do something personally or to
8 speak with Lil or so forth.

9 **MR. BLAIR:** Okay. Mr. Lipker,
10 I won't put you on the spot on this one. I
11 don't want to get you in trouble with your
12 superiors.

13 **MR. LIPKER:** All my bills are
14 paid through the United States Postal Service
15 mail system.

16 Internet sales that we go online and
17 make purchases all are mailed to our homes
18 through Priority Mail or Express Mail delivery
19 through the United States Postal Service.

20 **MR. BLAIR:** Mr. Laserson?

21 **MR. LASERSON:** Like a typical guy,
22 I will say my wife handles more of it than I do.
23 She didn't come today, so she can't answer.

24 It is a blend. Certainly more online
25 today than five, ten years ago, but still some

1 by mail.

2 A lot of other activity, invitations,
3 thank-you notes, my wife spends quite a bit of
4 time with tactile, physical product in the mail.
5 And we receive quite a bit in the mail.

6 More importantly than I think my
7 personal situation, I know you asked about that,
8 is the fact that we know that tens of millions
9 of Americans still do use even bill pay, but
10 certainly other services directly. But even
11 bill pay, I think the latest numbers that we
12 submitted to you based on a survey that GCA did
13 is that over 20 million Americans don't even
14 have regular access to the Internet to do that
15 online.

16 I can more qualitatively attest to
17 many people I know that have had Internet for
18 years that don't trust online and so choose to
19 do it through the mail.

20 So clearly, it's a blend, clearly
21 there has been a shift. But there is a pretty
22 substantial number of people still actively
23 engaged in both commerce and personal
24 correspondence by mail.

25 **MR. BLAIR:** When was -- I am

1 sorry, Madam Chair.

2 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** I just wanted to
3 ask Mr. Laserson, since you referenced some
4 surveys that you have done, whether you have
5 comprehensive surveys on how people use the
6 mail, whether people are choosing to use
7 greeting cards, whether they go to the post
8 office to drop their mail off, do they use the
9 Internet to buy their stamps?

10 **MR. LASERSON:** Yeah, we don't -- I
11 haven't seen anything --

12 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Do you have
13 information like that that you might be able to
14 share with the Commission that you don't
15 think --

16 **MR. LASERSON:** I don't have
17 anything --

18 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** -- is proprietary?
19 We don't want to --

20 **MR. LASERSON:** Right. I don't
21 have anything at that level of detail in terms
22 of specifically how -- where people are buying
23 their stamps. We haven't done any survey like
24 that. There was, about two, two and a half
25 years ago, a fairly comprehensive study of

1 overall mail usage done at the time of
2 regulatory issues that we did submit as
3 testimony, so that is out there. There hasn't
4 been any significant research that I am aware of
5 since then.

6 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Thank you. And
7 then you had another question.

8 **MR. BLAIR:** I just wanted to
9 hear from Mr. Giesler.

10 **MR. GIESLER:** We pay a little bit
11 through the Internet. Most of it is still
12 paper.

13 What I find interesting is the
14 outreach from banks, financial institutions,
15 utilities encouraging us to accept electronic
16 delivery of monthly statements or invoices.
17 And, you know, the question we have
18 tongue-in-cheek is, well, what are they doing to
19 make it worth my while to get it electronically,
20 because it is not as convenient as getting some
21 paper you can touch and feel.

22 But that seems to be the big push
23 that I have noticed, is more and more business
24 mailers who mail to consumers on a monthly basis
25 are trying to step out of the postal stream and

1 do it electronically.

2 **MR. BLAIR:** What about going to
3 a post office? When was the last time you were
4 in a postal -- in a post office, a station or
5 branch?

6 **MR. GIESLER:** Probably three and
7 a half years ago to help kids with passports.

8 **MR. BLAIR:** Thank you. I think
9 that's -- again, it's not scientific, but it
10 helps --

11 **MR. LASERSON:** I didn't get that
12 question, but let me answer it.

13 **MR. BLAIR:** Okay.

14 **MR. LASERSON:** I would say myself
15 personally, probably about five weeks ago.
16 There is one right on my way to work, very
17 conveniently located, so I will use it
18 personally to buy stamps or weigh things or
19 things that can't be done easily.

20 And I would say my wife, either the
21 Postal Service or the UPS store, whichever is
22 more convenient and has more convenient hours,
23 is there quite regularly.

24 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Okay.

25 **MR. BLAIR:** Okay.

1 **MR. WHITE:** Madam Chair, if I
2 could just --

3 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Oh, sure.

4 **MR. WHITE:** -- add just a
5 little something before we leave Commissioner
6 Blair's comments.

7 On the face of the Federal
8 Government, I think in that comment that you had
9 made, or Commissioner Blair made, I think that
10 is an important aspect here. And that is that
11 this is a conduit, this is an outlet for which
12 other services, and I think Steve mentioned the
13 passports, and other services perhaps, this is
14 the way to commercially expand the role of the
15 postal setting for services well beyond what has
16 even been contemplated up to now.

17 And that might be the way to overcome
18 some of the angst as to whether to restrict or
19 restrain the postal setting, is to expand its
20 level of services.

21 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Other questions?

22 **MS. LANGLEY:** Thank you very
23 much. One question, Mr. Laserson: If the post
24 office wasn't convenient on your way to work,
25 would you have stopped?

1 **MR. LASERSON:** Tricky question.
2 It probably would have been a family negotiation
3 whether my wife or I were to take care of it
4 between us, because that's just the reality of
5 dual-income families, right, who is going to be
6 able to get there more conveniently?

7 But I will say that my wife, who her
8 name -- we've talked about so many times, her
9 name is Sandy, goes to the UPS store quite
10 frequently, because it is darn convenient.

11 So I would say if the Postal Service
12 went away, the increased likelihood, at least
13 for Sandy, would be that she would go to the UPS
14 store.

15 **MS. LANGLEY:** That is one of my
16 concerns, if offices are removed, the
17 convenience and the direct line in which we seem
18 to drive influences a lot of decisions on how to
19 communicate with others, and I thank you for
20 that.

21 I have a couple questions for
22 Mr. Lipker. You are an experienced
23 discontinuance review manager coordinator. And
24 I have a question on the Rolling Mall Finance
25 Unit, because I think that was a good example

1 that you used.

2 After it was closed, did the nearby
3 facilities see an increase in customers? You
4 mentioned there were not an increase in
5 complaints, but was there an actual increase in
6 revenue and customers that you noticed?

7 **MR. LIPKER:** In the way of
8 increased revenue or increased traffic, I don't
9 have that data available. But when we do go in
10 and take a look at the customer satisfaction
11 waiting line, that indicator was at a minute
12 less.

13 **MS. LANGLEY:** But do you look at
14 the revenue at all? When you have a grouping of
15 facilities nearby and one is discontinued or
16 closed, one of the concerns is that those postal
17 customers will go away. And unless the Postal
18 Service is tracking to see whether or not these
19 other facilities see an increase, you don't know
20 whether or not you have lost those customers
21 forever.

22 **MR. LIPKER:** No, I don't. I do
23 not know the answer.

24 **MS. LANGLEY:** Okay. Thank you.
25 The other question I had for you is, Mr. White

1 mentioned the added revenue that communities
2 seem to enjoy by having accessible postal
3 facilities. And I am wondering whether or not
4 you look at demographic information and the
5 economic condition of the area in which a unit
6 may be closed to ensure that the removal,
7 discontinuance, closure of a particular facility
8 won't somehow disadvantage a community.

9 **MR. LIPKER:** We do look at
10 demographics when we go into a study. We
11 normally look at U.S. Census data to look at
12 population growth, business growth of that area
13 where the offices are located.

14 If you are asking do we go back in
15 and take a look at how the closing of that post
16 office would affect the community, we do get
17 community input and we do use that as part of
18 the study when we project what our plans are for
19 presenting that to Headquarters Retail.

20 **MS. LANGLEY:** Now, if you were to
21 have a low-income community and the individuals
22 may not have the opportunity to take time off
23 from work or to have the wherewithal to
24 communicate with the Postal Service, is there a
25 way of just making sure that the Postal Service

1 somehow is not further disadvantaging -- which
2 is not a word -- harming a community?

3 **MR. LIPKER:** In all of our
4 studies, we ask for community input, both
5 through the survey process and also the
6 community meetings, and we do listen to the
7 customers with their concerns, and that is one
8 of the classic examples, is "You are going to
9 hurt our community, we like this post office
10 here, it is very convenient."

11 So we do take that into consideration
12 when we put our packages together to present to
13 Postal Retail Headquarters.

14 **MS. LANGLEY:** If you don't mind,
15 I have one more question for Mr. Laserson.
16 American Greeting Corporation is one of Ohio's
17 premier companies as well as the nation, and it
18 is also a huge contributor, its products
19 contribute to postal volume and revenue. As an
20 entity that does contribute so much to the
21 Postal Service, has the Postal Service contacted
22 your company at all just as a real user of the
23 Postal Service?

24 **MR. LASERSON:** Not to my
25 knowledge, no.

1 **MS. LANGLEY:** Thank you.

2 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Mr. Acton?

3 **MR. ACTON:** I have a question
4 for Mr. Lipker. You, I believe, are collecting
5 responses and contacts from your customers, yes?

6 **MR. LIPKER:** Yes. That is
7 always part of the process.

8 **MR. ACTON:** Do you have a total
9 on the number of contacts, inquiries you may
10 have had in response to your list?

11 **MR. LIPKER:** In our list, we
12 were just reviewing those this morning, each
13 office that was identified in the initial phase
14 of the optimization had surveys put out to them.
15 We were looking at over 500 to 1,000 replies
16 average per unit.

17 **MR. ACTON:** How are you
18 acknowledging those?

19 **MR. LIPKER:** What we do in the
20 process is we go over each one of those
21 questionnaires, surveys that are returned to us,
22 we take the information that is gathered by the
23 frequently visited, on a daily basis, weekly
24 basis, we use that as an indicator on how often
25 that office is visited.

1 With the comment section, each one of
2 those comments are handled individually with a
3 reply sent back to the individual, if an address
4 is available for us to return correspondence.
5 If there is no return correspondence, we will
6 make an address to the record of the package we
7 present to Postal Headquarters that so many of
8 these surveys were returned with comments
9 without a return address.

10 **MR. ACTON:** Thank you.

11 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** I would like to
12 follow up if I can on this area, Mr. Lipker, and
13 I will pass on the questions.

14 We originally were informed that
15 there were 44 stations and branches on the list
16 of 400-something that were being evaluated, and
17 then recently 12 were taken off.

18 How did you decide to take those 12
19 off? What were the criteria used to remove the
20 12 from the 44?

21 **MR. LIPKER:** In the process, I
22 can't answer that question for you. I was a
23 person on the team that gathered data, reviewed
24 and presented it to our District staff. The
25 District staff then met and made a determination

1 on those 12 offices. So I can't comment on
2 exactly what put that office on the list or off
3 the list.

4 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Is there a set of
5 criteria that the District uses when they would
6 fill in a box?

7 **MR. LIPKER:** We look at the
8 effect on the community, the effect on the
9 employee. There are a couple others. That it
10 is not only one issue that could place an office
11 on a list or take it off the list. Everything
12 that we look at is part of that criteria to say
13 yes or no to an individual office.

14 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Can you give me any
15 information as to why you think there were so
16 many more offices put on the list in Ohio than
17 in some other states, what was the kind of
18 characteristics in Ohio that might have led to
19 more offices being on the list than other
20 places?

21 **MR. LIPKER:** Of those 44, I
22 can't address any issues out of the Columbus or
23 Cincinnati District. I don't know how they
24 produced their list. In the Northern Ohio
25 District, again, it came from the upper District

1 level management to identify possible offices to
2 be part of the optimization.

3 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Thank you. Now,
4 Mr. Hammond hasn't had a chance to ask any
5 questions. If you would like to pass that over.

6 **MR. HAMMOND:** Thank you, Madam
7 Chair. Is it on?

8 **MR. BLAIR:** It doesn't seem
9 like it.

10 **MR. HAMMOND:** Now it is on for
11 sure, yeah. Okay.

12 I was just wondering, Steve, with the
13 Greetings Card Association, as heading them up,
14 and as I have said before, I greatly appreciate
15 what you all have done in taking it upon
16 yourselves to represent what y'all call citizen
17 mailer or what I call us, customers, but citizen
18 mailer sounds neat.

19 **MR. LASERSON:** Citizen mailer or
20 customer.

21 **MR. HAMMOND:** Okay. But I know
22 you have devoted a lot of time, effort and money
23 from your association to do that, and I know it
24 is appreciated.

25 But from that perspective and looking

1 at some of your testimony, there are reasons why
2 some people believe this is very important. But
3 if there is consolidation and, say, a postal
4 facility shuts down, do you think that there is
5 something which might be an adequate alternative
6 where do you care whether, as long as people can
7 buy stamps from an ATM or from grocery stores or
8 if a postal facility is at least replaced with a
9 blue box, which you brought up, things like
10 that, does it make a great deal of difference to
11 you, as long as there is some sort of access to
12 people to be able to do some business, to at
13 least buy their stamps and to find a place to
14 stick their cards, et cetera, in the mailbox
15 somewhere for somebody to pick up?

16 **MR. LASERSON:** Yeah.

17 **MR. HAMMOND:** That is what I'm --

18 **MR. LASERSON:** And that's
19 precisely what we are saying, we need to look
20 holistically at the overall impact on us
21 customers.

22 And I am not necessarily for or
23 against any individual closing. I don't know
24 enough about the yellow stickies up there to
25 have an opinion on them. But when we think

1 about things like the elimination of Saturday
2 delivery and other things that have direct
3 impact on access to the postal system, what we
4 think about is, in the private sector, if you
5 have to cut costs, which we all have to do, you
6 look for ways to do it with the least minimal or
7 maybe no direct impact on your end customer.

8 So the question of can we find those
9 cost savings through overhead reduction and
10 processing facilities and things that are
11 invisible to the end customer, to us customers,
12 and won't affect our access, particularly that
13 last mile or first mile, that is where we would
14 like to see more attention as opposed to things
15 that are really directly impacting the
16 day-to-day accessibility of the Postal Service.

17 We know costs need to be
18 rationalized. The question is, how do you do
19 that with minimal impact on the customer? And
20 yes, seeking other inputs -- postage being
21 available is important, but the point that
22 Mr. Giesler made, ATMs, there are lots of ways
23 to buy stamps. It is more about input actually
24 into the system.

25 Mailing things that are of odd size

1 and you don't know the postage or bulk mailings
2 where you'd like to get something -- when I say
3 "bulk," for us customers, sending out a bunch of
4 invitations you would like to get them hand
5 canceled, things that are very important to the
6 individual mailer when they are at the most high
7 touch and high sort of emotional use of the
8 Postal Service as opposed to the transactional
9 mail. And also just general convenience for
10 transactional mail.

11 **MR. HAMMOND:** Okay. All right.

12 **MR. LASERSON:** But we believe
13 there's got to be ways to find cost savings that
14 aren't quite as directly impacting to the
15 customer.

16 **MR. HAMMOND:** Okay. And somewhat
17 along that line, Mr. Giesler, and, of course,
18 you are a cataloger, and in that probably
19 mailing out a lot of packages because of that,
20 many of which sometimes might even be returned,
21 I don't know. But do you see, with your
22 customers, any problems if there is a less
23 postal presence, like lessening of a facility,
24 where they might look for some other alternative
25 if they have to return a package to you or

1 things like that, does that make any difference?

2 **MR. GIESLER:** I think the biggest
3 change that we have seen in recent years is the
4 customers can now have packages picked up for
5 return at their home, whereas five or ten years
6 ago, they used to have to go to the post office
7 and physically drop the package off at the
8 facility.

9 When we ship a package, we include
10 pressure sensitive labels and our packaging can
11 be reused, if they have to return, which we hope
12 they don't. But when they do, they can seal it
13 back up, put the label on it and it is picked up
14 by the postal delivery person and brought back
15 to us.

16 So I think it is actually easier
17 today than it might have been several years ago
18 for customers to get stuff back to us.

19 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Do you have any
20 statistics on how much of your return is dropped
21 off at a post office versus picked up by a
22 letter carrier? Can you tell the difference?

23 **MR. GIESLER:** I really can't.
24 You know, we can take a look at the utilization
25 of the stickers, and in some cases we give

1 prepaid postage so that they don't even have to
2 deal with any of that.

3 And then that has shot up
4 significantly in the last couple of years, where
5 they will pay us -- we will deduct -- we will
6 pay the fee for the return and deduct it from
7 the money that we refund to them. And a larger
8 percentage of our return packages are coming
9 back that way than they were before.

10 **MR. HAMMOND:** I had just one
11 other quick convoluted question, Mr. Lipker.

12 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Sure.

13 **MR. HAMMOND:** Maybe you can't
14 completely answer this. But you talked about
15 things that you did at the one mall, at Rolling
16 Acres?

17 **MR. LIPKER:** Rolling Acres.

18 **MR. HAMMOND:** Rolling Acres.
19 Whereas, basically, you had done different
20 things with that facility and there were times
21 where you had to cut back hours and et cetera
22 and things like that.

23 When you were given your
24 instructions, or did you receive instructions --
25 have you considered any possibilities other than

1 a complete closing of a facility?

2 **MR. LIPKER:** With the Rolling
3 Acres Mall, the hours originally when they
4 opened the facility were eight hours. Through
5 the use of some of our WOS, which we call the
6 Window Operations Survey, they saw the workload
7 was decreasing.

8 So instead of doing a complete
9 closure or discontinuance, they altered the
10 hours, which shortened them. And even after the
11 shortened hours, the traffic through the mall
12 and the use of the Finance Unit still declined.

13 So we did, I think, everything we
14 could have done to keep that office open from
15 the existing eight hours a day, taking it down
16 to four, to the point that it just wasn't
17 working.

18 **MR. HAMMOND:** So in your
19 consideration of the other things, which at
20 times have been on a list in Ohio, maybe that's
21 the way I should put it, do you have the -- do
22 you have the possibility of suggesting anything
23 other than a complete closure of a facility?

24 **MR. LIPKER:** As part of the
25 process, I am not the only one that provides the

1 data to these packages. We have different
2 functions from finance to function 4, which
3 handles our clerk operations, to our F-2, which
4 is our city carriers.

5 So a lot of different departments
6 have input into the process, and that would be
7 something that the retail side of the process
8 would bring up to the decision-makers that this
9 is a possibility or this is not a possibility.

10 So with the whole group in the
11 District working on it, there is a lot of input
12 coming from not only myself, but other players
13 in the process.

14 **MR. HAMMOND:** Okay. Thank you.
15 Thank you, Madam Chairman.

16 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Again, Mr. Lipker,
17 if you don't mind, you indicated in your initial
18 testimony that there are many other
19 opportunities for access to purchase stamps and
20 to buy things online or to go to the grocery
21 stores.

22 Do you have any information yourself
23 about how much revenue is generated by those
24 different categories of options for citizens
25 other than the post office?

1 **MR. LIPKER:** Are you talking
2 about automated tellers and things of that
3 nature?

4 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Automated tellers,
5 buying stamps online, going to grocery stores to
6 buy stamps.

7 **MR. LIPKER:** I don't have that
8 information available today, but I can get that
9 for you.

10 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Could it be -- do
11 you have it broken down by --

12 **MR. LIPKER:** How would you like
13 it broken down? We can --

14 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Well, I think one
15 of the concerns we have is that we have been
16 told by the Postal Service that there is this
17 alternative access available to customers other
18 than the post office, but we don't have very
19 clear specific information about what customers
20 are using instead of the post office. Are they
21 using grocery stores? Are they using stamps by
22 mail? Are they requesting pickup or purchase
23 from the letter carrier?

24 We, I think, need to feel confident
25 that these other access methods are being used

1 and are, in fact, growing, if we feel that post
2 offices themselves can be reduced. So we are
3 looking for that kind of information.

4 If you can provide whatever you have
5 in your decision-making based on the revenue
6 that you get from alternative methods --

7 **MR. LIPKER:** Okay. What I will
8 do is --

9 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** -- we would
10 appreciate it.

11 **MR. LIPKER:** When I get back to
12 the District, I will go speak with our retail
13 manager and ask him to provide me that data.
14 What I ask is, how do you want that broken down?
15 Do you want it broken down strictly for the
16 Northern Ohio District, do you want it broken
17 down by plus three ZIP code, which we call 441,
18 440? How would you like that broken down?

19 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Well, I think we
20 would like it broken down by ZIP code so that we
21 can, and to the extent we can, relate it to post
22 offices, if it is possible for you to do that.

23 **MR. LIPKER:** Okay. Just to
24 clarify, just for the Northern Ohio District or
25 nationally?

1 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Well, why don't we
2 start with the Northern Ohio District, and then
3 we can deal with the Postal Service for the
4 national numbers. I don't want to make you make
5 a commitment for them. I can see the lawyers in
6 the back being a bit nervous about that.

7 **MR. LIPKER:** That's why I wanted
8 to make sure you just wanted the Northern Ohio.

9 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** But I would feel
10 comfortable getting that information.

11 **MR. LIPKER:** I will go to the
12 retail manager and have him break that down for
13 each.

14 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** And thank you very
15 much.

16 And then, I guess, I wanted to ask
17 Mr. Giesler a question that really overlaps with
18 Mr. Laserson.

19 Mr. Laserson is emphasizing how
20 important greeting cards and individual citizen
21 mailer use is to people's value of the mail.

22 And you're a catalog mailer. Do you
23 see that it is important for your business to
24 have Mr. Laserson's business there in the mail
25 stream so that people will feel it is important

1 to look at the mail, or would it be okay if they
2 just got catalogs?

3 You know, is that enough for you --
4 do you think that the catalogs alone are
5 motivating enough for people to read and you
6 feel comfortable about that as a communications
7 mechanism without the need to assure individual
8 mailers having the right to have individual mail
9 at their home?

10 **MR. GIESLER:** I think that people
11 are probably more likely to go to the mailbox if
12 it's a mailbox full of advertising materials and
13 personal letters and hopefully a greeting card
14 and an invitation. So, you know, I believe a
15 mailbox full of strictly advertising materials,
16 whether it's catalogs or something else, is
17 going to be less valuable to a consumer than a
18 mailbox that is full of lots of different
19 things, both personal business and advertising
20 materials.

21 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Thank you. Are
22 there any other questions?

23 **MR. BLAIR:** I have just a brief
24 question. And this is for Mr. Lipker. I know
25 you've gotten a number of questions here today

1 as the Government witness. Usually you bear the
2 brunt of the questions. So you certainly have
3 my sympathy and understanding.

4 Chairman Goldway has graciously
5 provided us with a map of Ohio here, and I just
6 wanted to get -- you have in your testimony the
7 ZIP codes and the number of delivery points and
8 the number of people you serve. But from a
9 geographic perspective, can you give us an idea
10 of what the Northern District of Ohio looks
11 like?

12 **MR. LIPKER:** Sure. If you want
13 me to stand up?

14 **MR. BLAIR:** Sure, that would be
15 helpful.

16 **MR. LIPKER:** The Northern Ohio
17 District --

18 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Why don't you speak
19 up so that --

20 **MR. LIPKER:** The Northern Ohio
21 District starts at the Pennsylvania-Ohio border
22 at Lake Erie, comes down the lakeshore just to
23 the west of Sandusky, Ohio, goes down through
24 the 448 ZIP codes, through the Mansfield area,
25 down into the 439 area down at the furthest

1 point of Sardis, Ohio, which is in this
2 location, it follows the Ohio River back up and
3 the Pennsylvania border.

4 **MR. BLAIR:** That is helpful.
5 We have talked about -- you have talked about
6 the closure of the Rolling Hills facility. And
7 just, we deal with postal issues every day and
8 we know about the contraction that the Postal
9 Service is trying to go through in order to meet
10 their expenses and obligations.

11 But when was the last time that you
12 opened a new facility in the District?

13 **MR. LIPKER:** That I could not
14 address. I am not sure when was the last
15 opening that we did have.

16 **MR. BLAIR:** So we're talking --
17 when we are talking about these closures, it is
18 not that you are closing some and opening up new
19 ones, you are reducing the footprint of the
20 Postal Service's presence in this District?

21 **MR. LIPKER:** There are
22 discontinuances, yes.

23 **MR. BLAIR:** Okay. Thank you
24 very much.

25 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** And Ms. Langley has

1 a question.

2 **MS. LANGLEY:** Let me try to be
3 brief, because I know we've kept our witnesses
4 for some time.

5 Mr. Lipker, I am interested in the
6 facilities that are next to or on college and
7 university campuses as well as military
8 facilities. In the Northern Ohio District, are
9 there any such facilities slated for
10 discontinuance review?

11 **MR. LIPKER:** In the Northern
12 Ohio District, there is not.

13 **MS. LANGLEY:** There aren't, okay.
14 Thank you. Have there been in your experience?

15 **MR. LIPKER:** There has not been
16 any under study.

17 **MS. LANGLEY:** Thank you. And let
18 me be brief to Mr. Giesler.

19 One thing that we are discussing here
20 today is alternative access points for Postal
21 Service. And as a cataloger, you have ten
22 different products that you are putting out, and
23 I am not sure if you can share this with us, but
24 is there an average age of your customer?

25 **MR. GIESLER:** Our customers are

1 predominantly female and predominantly older. I
2 would say 55-plus years old would characterize
3 our customers.

4 **MS. LANGLEY:** And I would assume
5 many of them are accessing your catalogs also
6 through the Internet, or they are at least
7 receiving citizen catalogs, and then do they
8 order through the Internet?

9 **MR. GIESLER:** They receive a
10 physical catalog. They can place orders on the
11 Internet, which is our smallest channel of
12 receiving orders. They can order on the
13 telephone. And our largest channel is through
14 the mail. So they will fill out an order form,
15 write a check and mail it back to us.

16 **MS. LANGLEY:** So they are still
17 relying on the mail, going to the post office
18 probably to get their stamps just to send in an
19 order?

20 **MR. GIESLER:** I am not sure how
21 they are getting their stamps, but yeah, they
22 are using the post office to mail them back to
23 us, yes.

24 **MS. LANGLEY:** If the Internet is
25 your smallest channel, is it growing?

1 **MR. GIESLER:** Yes.

2 **MS. LANGLEY:** So it is growing?

3 **MR. GIESLER:** It is growing.

4 **MS. LANGLEY:** I am a little
5 concerned that the senior population may not go
6 toward alternative --

7 **MR. GIESLER:** To answer your
8 question, our customers are probably not buying
9 their stamps online.

10 **MS. LANGLEY:** They are probably
11 not?

12 **MR. GIESLER:** They are either
13 getting them at the Postal Service or a kiosk or
14 grocery store or drugstore. I am not sure.
15 They are probably not online.

16 **MS. LANGLEY:** Thank you.

17 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Any other
18 questions?

19 I have one for Mr. White. Perhaps
20 you can help us with this, because we have
21 touched on this before, and you may not have
22 information specifically for Independence, but
23 you are in the business community.

24 We have a sense that a post office in
25 a small community is supportive of the other

1 economic activities that go around it in that
2 small community, that having a post office in a
3 community, even if the revenue for that
4 particular post office is small, somehow helps
5 the other economic activity in the area.

6 If I am right, how could we measure
7 that? How could we look at that interaction
8 between post offices and other businesses in the
9 community?

10 **MR. WHITE:** You and I think
11 alike, because one of my comments was going to
12 be exactly, one of the other aspects of this
13 view on local post office are their -- not only
14 that I mentioned earlier their economic impact,
15 but how they contribute to the traffic that they
16 might provide to neighboring businesses, to
17 other facilities that are nearby.

18 In this particular case for the
19 Independence Post Office, they sit in a strip
20 mall. They sit in a shopping center where they
21 are an anchor store. Whereas you might have a
22 department store as an anchor to a shopping
23 center, well, the post office is an anchor to
24 this shopping center.

25 So it draws for the other neighboring

1 businesses and contributes to their welfare and
2 contributes to their businesses and bottom line.

3 Overall, I think having a post office
4 in a community rounds it out. It gives all of
5 its abilities and amenities to offer, as I
6 would, as I speak to businesses that "We have
7 different services available to you."

8 As much as I talk about the city and
9 what we do, I talk about what is available, what
10 is there, not only in the region, but locally,
11 what do you have immediate access to.

12 So I regard it as one of those key
13 elements of a setting for a commercial
14 development to have postal services, among other
15 things; but a very key factor in the development
16 and continual vitality of a commercial setting.

17 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Do you have any
18 sense of how we might measure that?

19 **MR. WHITE:** Yes, and back to
20 the measurement. I think that would take an
21 effort, but it would probably be as much as we
22 would do in other kinds of efforts, we would
23 take and do an interview with businesses.

24 I mean, can we somehow calculate, by
25 virtue of you having that post office either

1 next door or in the community, do you have a way
2 of sensing that there is some contribution to
3 your business, how you fare as a business?

4 Next door to the post office here in
5 Independence is a pharmacy. Well, is somebody
6 combining the trip to the post office and to the
7 pharmacy? Do they use this pharmacy as opposed
8 to the other two in the community because they
9 have that ability to consolidate their trip into
10 one stop, walk to one or the other?

11 Somehow we have to do some kind of
12 interviewing in order to assess or measure what
13 that impact is. But it is an impact. I have a
14 sense there is. It is just how much and how
15 deep.

16 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Thank you.

17 **MS. LANGLEY:** Chairman Goldway, I
18 just want to say, I think that is a very
19 important factor, because so many of those
20 facilities that are under review right now are
21 in aging suburban areas, and the well-being,
22 economic well-being of these communities will be
23 impacted if a facility is discontinued.

24 And so having some way of measuring
25 this I think would be very helpful to everyone.

1 Thank you.

2 **MR. WHITE:** I would agree.

3 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Well, I think this
4 panel has been most helpful to us. You can see
5 how interested all of the commissioners are in
6 the information that you have and the complex
7 nature of the dialogue that we are having, the
8 interrelationship between these issues and the
9 importance of holding this dialogue in a town
10 like Independence where we can see how it
11 impacts real businesses operating in Middle
12 America.

13 So I want to thank you for your time
14 and your interest and assure you that both your
15 written statements and the record of the
16 testimony here will be available through the
17 Postal Regulatory Commission's Web site, and we
18 will be carefully considering it in reviewing
19 our information in forming an advisory opinion.

20 If you have other people in the
21 community who were not able to participate today
22 but would like to add to the record, please
23 encourage them to do so. We want to have as
24 broad a range of input as possible.

25 Thank you, and you are welcome to

1 stay. We are going to have another panel now
2 that I will be happy to introduce. So thank you
3 very much.

4 **MR. WHITE:** Thank you, Madam
5 Chairman, for being in Independence.

6 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Would it be
7 appropriate for us to take a five-minute break
8 before we convene the second panel? I think
9 people have been patient in waiting a long time.
10 So with your indulgence, we will do that.

11 (Thereupon, a recess was taken.)

12 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Okay. I am going
13 to reconvene our public hearing after our break
14 and begin by introducing our second panel of
15 witnesses. Thank you all for your patience and
16 for your participation.

17 Leading off our second panel is
18 Cleveland Ward 21 Councilman Martin Keane.

19 He will be followed by Terry Grant,
20 who is President of the Ohio State Chapter of
21 the American Postal Workers Union.

22 And then we have Pamela Rosado, who
23 is the Outreach Coordinator for Policy Matters
24 Ohio.

25 And our final witness on the panel is

1 Mario Principe, who is the Director of Lessor
2 Affairs for the Association of U.S. Postal
3 Lessors.

4 Again, thank you all for
5 participating with us, and Council Member Keane,
6 if you would begin.

7 **MR. KEANE:** Certainly. Thank
8 you, Chairwoman and members of the Commission.
9 First, welcome.

10 I am a Cleveland City Councilman and
11 have been for three years, and my name is Martin
12 Keane, here hopefully to answer some of the
13 questions that came up through the first panel.

14 I apologize, I do not have any
15 prepared remarks. I was asked to come and speak
16 on behalf of the community which I am very lucky
17 to represent.

18 Also with me today, with the Chair's
19 permission.

20 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Absolutely.

21 **MR. KEANE:** Councilman Terrell
22 Pruitt from the City of Cleveland Ward 1, who I
23 think is in the back. Councilman Pruitt and
24 I -- there are 21 wards for the Commission's
25 information, 21 wards currently in the City of

1 Cleveland.

2 Ward 1, represented by Councilman
3 Pruitt, is in the very southeast corner of the
4 city. Not indicative of the map, but Ward 21 is
5 the very west side of the City of Cleveland.
6 And in between is the other members of Cleveland
7 City Council, which are mostly represented on
8 the list of affected post offices.

9 And my comments today are basically
10 on behalf of -- and it is interesting when you
11 think of a Cleveland City Council or a City
12 Council throughout this country, we advocate for
13 our constituency. In this regard, and my
14 purposes of testifying today, are on behalf of
15 the City of Cleveland.

16 And with all of the changes going on
17 throughout the country and certainly in our own
18 front yards with, as was discussed previously,
19 the Diocese of the City of Cleveland closing
20 many of our churches, our local public
21 transportation system taking away our community
22 circulators, which are a lifeline to our small
23 businesses.

24 Through the economic downturns and
25 the effects that it has had on our automobile

1 dealerships, the city and its communities are
2 standing strong, the City of Cleveland. And I
3 am here on behalf of Ward 21.

4 Also in the audience today is the
5 anchor of West Park, which is what we're also
6 known as, and the retail district, being Kamm's
7 Plaza. Lisa Kaye from Kamm's Plaza Property
8 Management is directly behind me in the second
9 row.

10 Also Tony Krieger from Franciscan
11 Village, which is a wonderful elderly facility
12 within walking distance of Kamm's Plaza, 200
13 elderly residents, and they do a great job.

14 And also Steve Lorenz from Kamm's
15 Corners Development Corporation, which is, for
16 lack of a better term, the Chamber of Commerce
17 for Ward 21. I represent approximately 23,000
18 people and 10,000 households.

19 It is a great community, and a big
20 part of our community is Kamm's Plaza and our
21 retail district. And I don't -- you know, I
22 wish I could invite y'all into the neighborhood
23 and show you what we have going on, but it is
24 remarkable.

25 We have a \$10 million investment into

1 our downtown retail district. We have stable
2 small businesses. Kamm's Plaza is 35
3 storefronts, one vacancy. You don't see that in
4 any of the affluent suburbs, you don't see it
5 anywhere in Northeast Ohio. In my opinion, and
6 again, I can be myopic to a fault, but that is
7 my job.

8 We have the anchor tenant with the
9 grocer, we have a restaurant, we have flower
10 shops, we have small businesses that use this
11 post office every single day.

12 And when you look at the data and you
13 look at the numbers and the volume, it really
14 doesn't give it -- do it justice. There is one
15 person that works there typically, her name is
16 Goldie. Everybody knows her. She is great.
17 And there is always a line. There is.

18 If there is any policy going on from
19 a councilmatic standpoint, if there are any
20 issues that I need to discuss, I can either go
21 to the barber shop or the post office in Kamm's
22 Plaza and have the sounding board that you need,
23 as a small community representative.

24 I know the Commission has got a
25 difficult job ahead. But again, the questions

1 that I heard addressed to the first panel really
2 gave me some hope. You know, I have been
3 involved in a number of these discussions with
4 the churches, with the public transportation
5 systems, with the other entities and the
6 decisions that have already been made.

7 So I was really -- it felt good to
8 hear the questions. You know, our only other
9 post office in the area which I represent is, I
10 would think, a post office. I am not sure of
11 the delineation. One of them is a major
12 processor of mail. The other one is a
13 storefront, go in and buy stamps and say hi and
14 mail your letters.

15 And that is to the eastern edge of
16 our ward. There is absolutely no way you are
17 going to walk there.

18 But to paint the picture, this is
19 your quintessential neighborhood, this is. You
20 walk there, you do your grocery shopping, you go
21 to the Radio Shack. You know, all those
22 national retailers, but most of them are small,
23 smaller in scale certainly, are making it
24 through this economic time. And the post office
25 is a big part of that. It is not even a

1 question to me that it is a huge part of it.

2 The small businesses, when you go in
3 there, you don't just see the people that you
4 saw dropping their kids off at school. I mean,
5 you see the guys from Cartridge World or Omega
6 Sports next door, you see them putting packages
7 in to customers. And it is just -- it is vital
8 to our community.

9 And other than the eastern edge
10 border on our southern edge, we have the Airport
11 Post Office, which has been the topic of
12 discussion in front of the Postmaster General or
13 before the Regulatory Commission, I am not sure
14 which one. But that was strictly for its
15 flexible hours. You know, not strictly. It is
16 utilized, but it has a unique perspective within
17 the Postal Service.

18 But the Kamm's Plaza Post Office, it
19 is just part of our community.

20 So, again, I didn't prepare any
21 remarks, so I hope -- I am more than willing to
22 answer questions if you should have them.

23 Councilman Pruitt is in a very
24 similar situation as am I, with a plaza walk-in
25 post office. His is similarly with one vacancy

1 in the biggest -- his is the biggest plaza in
2 the City of Cleveland, with the Lee Harvard
3 Shopping Center. He has a Dave's Supermarket.
4 You know, this is foot traffic.

5 And when Commissioner Blair had said
6 earlier about the face of the Federal
7 Government, absolutely. You feel safe. You
8 feel good walking into the other stores when the
9 post office is there. You are doing your
10 point-to-point shopping and you are spending
11 dollars in a neighborhood that needs it.

12 So that's why I think I was invited.
13 That is why I have spoke for hopefully not the
14 last five minutes, but I would certainly stick
15 around for any questions. Thank you.

16 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Thank you, Council
17 Member Keane. You were most eloquent without
18 notes. That is terrific. And I really
19 appreciate you bringing so many people with you.

20 **MR. KEANE:** Thank you.

21 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Mr. Grant?

22 **MR. GRANT:** Good afternoon to
23 Chairman Goldway and the other commissioners. I
24 would like to thank you for the opportunity to
25 appear here today.

1 My name is Terry Grant. I am the
2 full-time President of the Ohio Postal Workers
3 Union, which is the state affiliate for the
4 American Postal Workers Union, the largest
5 postal union in the world.

6 Our organization here in Ohio
7 represents some 40 different locals and about
8 8,500 workers. In addition, we also represent
9 another 400 employees that work in post offices
10 that are too small to have their own local
11 union.

12 Our people are basically the ones
13 that most people don't recognize. You know, we
14 work inside. We process and transport the mail.

15 And I would also like to recognize,
16 we have some members of the Cleveland Local here
17 this morning -- or this afternoon, excuse me,
18 including Local President Danny Pride, back
19 here.

20 You are probably going to hear a
21 little different viewpoint on things from me
22 than you have heard today. I think that it is
23 good, and I really appreciate the opportunity to
24 be here, because I think all different sides
25 need to be considered.

1 One of the things that hasn't been
2 mentioned yet, and I strongly believe that part
3 of the reason that we originally saw this list
4 of 3,200 proposed station closings was it
5 provided the Postal Service with the opportunity
6 to force senior employees into considering
7 retirement.

8 We all know, or those of us that work
9 in the post office know that our most senior
10 employees normally work in these stations and
11 branches. I mean, we don't have a lot of day
12 jobs left, and these are prime jobs that usually
13 go to our most senior people.

14 And by using the possibility of
15 closing a station and having those employees
16 move to less desirable jobs, maybe on afternoons
17 or midnights, you know, an older worker would
18 really consider either retiring or leaving the
19 service rather than completely changing their
20 lifestyle.

21 I also feel that there hasn't been
22 enough consideration given to how these closings
23 would affect postal patrons who live near a
24 station that could possibly be closed. Postal
25 management compiles data. We heard that word

1 many times earlier.

2 You know, they compile their data by
3 feeding information to a computer and out a
4 computer says, you know, "This might be a good
5 idea to consider." And I don't think that
6 leaves a lot of room for judgment on what extra
7 expense or hardship there would be to the
8 customers who use those stations.

9 When we dealt with earlier, this past
10 several years we have dealt with several
11 situations where the Post Office in Ohio
12 considered consolidating mail processing
13 facilities, specifically Canton into Akron,
14 which was done, Zanesville into Columbus, which
15 was not accomplished, and there are a couple
16 other ones.

17 But in those cases, when management
18 held community meetings to give the people in
19 the community the opportunity to provide their
20 input, we found out that they had -- other than
21 the data that they had compiled out of their
22 computers, they hadn't done any testing to see
23 if their plans would actually hurt or delay mail
24 service.

25 And at those community meetings,

1 which were attended, I went to two of them, were
2 attended by hundreds of people at each one, it
3 was hard for them to answer those kind of
4 questions. "Well, have you done any testing to
5 see if this would, you know, delay my service?"
6 "Well, no."

7 So I believe that in some ways these
8 proposed station closings are being handled the
9 same way, just data out of a computer says,
10 "This is a good idea, so we should do it."

11 In my written testimony, I provided
12 seven different examples from cities around
13 Ohio, and I would like to speak about two of
14 those this afternoon.

15 I am from Canton, Ohio, so the way I
16 found out about the proposed closings -- and I
17 should add that the Postal Service is not under
18 any obligation to notify myself personally about
19 these, I found out about it through the local
20 newspaper. They had a front-page story.

21 At that time there were three
22 stations being considered for closure. I
23 learned late Friday afternoon that two of those
24 stations are now amongst those that have been
25 taken off the list. I don't know if that's a

1 permanent decision or not.

2 But the one that is left is the
3 Dueber Avenue station, and it serves an older,
4 blue collar community that is close to the
5 largest hospital in the county. And there is an
6 interstate highway that runs right behind the
7 post office, so there is not much chance that
8 the owner of the building could market this for
9 some other company, because there is very little
10 access and it would be hard for somebody to
11 develop a business there.

12 There are, in that building, two
13 other smaller businesses who I am sure rely on
14 traffic from the post office to assist in their
15 revenue. So I would think that if the post
16 office moved out of there, it would severely
17 damage their business.

18 It is also a station that has 35
19 letter carrier routes in it. So if they would
20 close the revenue portion of the station, they
21 still have 35 letter carrier routes that they
22 have to deal with. Now, I guess they could
23 possibly move those to another facility, but I
24 don't know any facilities that could hold that
25 many people.

1 There are two stations, both about a
2 mile or a mile and a half away from the Dueber
3 Avenue station. The lease there runs through
4 2015 at more than \$5,000 a month.

5 And I should say that according to
6 the local union president, who the Postal
7 Service is obligated to notify about these
8 proposed closings, they also learned about it
9 from the local newspaper, not from the post
10 office.

11 In Toledo, Ohio, the station that is
12 under consideration is located at 1609 Dorr
13 Street. And that location is a predominantly
14 African-American neighborhood consisting of very
15 low-income people, who most of them actually
16 walk to the post office. And the next closest
17 station there is five miles away. So needless
18 to say, I don't think those customers would be
19 walking five miles to the post office.

20 And again, we are in another
21 situation where, according to the local union,
22 management did not notify them, as contractually
23 bound, and the local union has even gone as far
24 as requesting information from management about
25 this and it has not been provided.

1 The local president there feels that
2 these families are being disenfranchised by the
3 Postal Service.

4 So, as a matter of fact, most of the
5 proposed station closings in Ohio are in older
6 community areas, where people rely on the post
7 office to buy stamps and money orders and other
8 postal products.

9 If they were closed, they would have
10 to travel greater distances to access the post
11 office, and that would bring additional expense
12 to their already, I would assume, tightly
13 stretched budgets. And to handicapped people, I
14 think it would really create physical hardships
15 with greater travel.

16 I think one other important issue, in
17 most communities, and this has been touched on a
18 little bit, the post office is a sign of hope
19 for everybody that lives in that community. I
20 mean, every day in front of every station and
21 post office in this country, the American flag
22 goes up on a flagpole, and people see that and
23 see the presence of the Postal Service.

24 And I know from experience when I was
25 a window clerk that people -- it really means

1 something for people to see that flag, to know
2 that there is a Government presence nearby.

3 No matter how rough the neighborhood
4 may be or how poor or in what shape of
5 disrepair, you can always get to the post office
6 to do your business. I think that is a really
7 important asset of the American life.

8 And I think that taking a station out
9 of a community is like telling them, "We are
10 giving up on you."

11 Thank you for your consideration. I
12 will be glad to answer any questions.

13 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Thank you,
14 Mr. Grant.

15 And Pamela Rosado, did I pronounce it
16 correctly?

17 **MS. ROSADO:** Yes, you did. Good
18 afternoon, Chairwoman Goldway and the esteemed
19 members of the Commission. I am Pamela Rosado,
20 Outreach Coordinator for Policy Matters Ohio, a
21 nonprofit, nonpartisan research institute, with
22 offices in Cleveland and Columbus. And I thank
23 you for the opportunity to present testimony
24 today on this critical issue.

25 As the United States Postal Service

1 faces deep financial losses in 2009 and beyond,
2 decision-makers are considering closing hundreds
3 of retail post offices and branches across the
4 United States.

5 In Ohio, 32 post offices are under
6 review as possible sites for closure. And we
7 know that number has been altered, as we found
8 out today.

9 Closure of post office branches will
10 result in reduced accessibility to postal
11 services, reduced employment and possible
12 reduction in economic activity in neighborhoods
13 where the post office is one of the anchors of a
14 commercial center.

15 The offices being considered for
16 closure are disproportionately located in
17 low-income neighborhoods in Ohio. As the table
18 at the end of this document shows, 79 percent of
19 the neighborhoods in danger of losing their
20 local post office have median household incomes
21 below the state median household income. This
22 excludes three neighborhoods for which income
23 data were not immediately available.

24 Ten of the post offices are in ZIP
25 codes with median household incomes below

1 \$30,000 and six are in ZIP codes with median
2 household incomes below \$20,000.

3 When accounting for the population of
4 these areas, the numbers are less lopsided, but
5 the possible cuts still disproportionately
6 affect low-income areas. Certain offices in
7 extremely low-income areas have relatively low
8 populations, which could skew our data and make
9 it seem as though more low-income residents are
10 being affected than really are.

11 Most notably, one of these is the
12 Akron Downtown Station Office, where the ZIP
13 code surrounding the office only has 904
14 residents. However, this is the exception to
15 the rule. The vast majority of the 23 areas
16 with median incomes below the state's median
17 income have populations over 10,000.

18 Of the 579,375 people living in ZIP
19 codes with a post office under review, 401,839
20 of them -- that's 69.3 percent -- live in areas
21 with median incomes below Ohio's median income.

22 There are many reasons these numbers
23 concern us. First and foremost is their
24 implication for low-income neighborhood
25 residents' access to postal services. These

1 residents have less access to personal
2 transportation and less disposable income for
3 fuel and public transportation. They also have
4 less access to private mailing options that are
5 more prevalent in high-income areas. Removing a
6 branch from their communities may constrain
7 their ability to use the U.S. Postal Service.

8 Our second concern relates to
9 eliminating a source of decent civil service
10 employment in some of Ohio's poorest
11 communities. While current employees are
12 expected to be transferred instead of
13 eliminated, a move we applaud, long term it will
14 mean fewer jobs in proximity to these already
15 financially challenged communities.

16 Third, in financially strained
17 communities, the presence of the post office as
18 a neighborhood anchor is more vital than in
19 wealthier areas. Businesses and residents who
20 rely on these services will have one less reason
21 to stay in these communities and blighted areas
22 that can least afford it will be burdened with
23 one more empty storefront.

24 An additional issue, which we were
25 unable to examine in the limited time available,

1 is the degree to which these closures may be
2 contributing to sprawl and detracting from urban
3 vitality and density. We encourage others to do
4 further research to determine whether the
5 closures are disproportionately in densely
6 populated areas.

7 We understand that financial
8 constraints may force some post office closures,
9 and we recognize that no community likes to lose
10 its public service and institutions.
11 Nonetheless, the disproportionate effect on
12 low-income neighborhoods is troubling.

13 The United States Postal Service is a
14 public service with an admirable history of
15 making mail delivery affordable and available to
16 residents across the economic spectrum.

17 Cost-cutting measures that
18 disproportionately affect low-income residents
19 should be reexamined and other options should be
20 pursued.

21 Our research is only a brief
22 examination of the plans to close post offices
23 throughout Ohio. We have found that low-income
24 neighborhoods will suffer the majority of these
25 closures, and we encourage the United States

1 Postal Service to conduct additional research
2 and review this more closely to avoid an
3 unreasonable burden on Ohio's poorest residents.

4 We know that the United States Postal
5 Service procedures call for analysis of access
6 issues as part of the consolidation initiative.
7 While we understand that the United States
8 Postal Service has chosen these branches for a
9 variety of reasons based on their research, we
10 hope that consideration of continuing accessible
11 postal service to low-income residents will be
12 included as an important priority in the
13 decision-making process.

14 I would like to add my disclaimer
15 here. As I am the Outreach Coordinator for
16 Policy Matters Ohio, I didn't do the detailed
17 research here, but our researcher is present and
18 we both would be more than happy to answer your
19 question.

20 Phil Stephens, if you could raise
21 your hand for me. He is an intern, actually,
22 working in our office and is working closely
23 with our research director, Zach Schiller.
24 Thank you.

25 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Thank you.

1 Mr. Principe?

2 **MR. PRINCIPE:** Chairman Goldway
3 and other commissioners, I would like to thank
4 you for the opportunity to speak this afternoon.

5 I represent the Association of United
6 States Postal Lessors. We have about 3,300
7 members, many of whom own multiple facilities,
8 representing about 40 percent of the entire
9 leased space used by the Postal Service.

10 Our organization does not question
11 the right of the Postal Service to discontinue a
12 postal facility when necessary. However, we do
13 believe that all customers have the right to a
14 maximum degree of regular and effective service,
15 whether they are served by a station, branch,
16 main office or smaller independent post office.

17 We believe it is reasonable to expect
18 the Postal Service to follow Federal law
19 governing the closing of independent post
20 offices and its own rules and guidelines which
21 were developed to assure compliance with the
22 law.

23 We urge the Commission to seriously
24 consider that the closing or consolidation of a
25 station or a branch should be treated the same

1 as the closing or consolidation of a small
2 independent post office.

3 The only difference is the name the
4 various types of post offices were given by the
5 Postmaster General or other official in the old
6 Post Office Department.

7 According to a history of stations
8 and branches written by the Postal Service
9 Historian's office, many years ago, stations
10 were established not only to keep up with
11 cities' population growth, but also when
12 formerly independent post offices were
13 discontinued and converted to stations of a
14 nearby post office.

15 Sometimes converting of post offices
16 to stations was done to provide free mail
17 delivery to customers, since initially residents
18 of only the most populous cities were eligible
19 for free delivery.

20 Until 1908, the terms "station" and
21 "branch" were used interchangeably. In May
22 1908 -- I know, I was there. Just kidding -- to
23 help preserve the identity of communities that
24 lost their post office, the Postmaster General
25 ordered that all postal stations located outside

1 the city limits be called "branches" and those
2 located within the city limits "stations."

3 AUSPL questions why customers of a
4 city station or suburban branch should not be
5 protected by the same rules as customers of a
6 rural independent post office.

7 Past experience has shown, when there
8 are budget issues, training is curtailed or
9 eliminated, facilities projects are put on hold
10 or canceled, and a freeze on hiring is put into
11 effect.

12 We are extremely concerned that the
13 extensive shuffling and reducing of postal
14 personnel currently underway and the pressure to
15 reduce the number of facilities will result in
16 unjustified emergency suspensions of small post
17 offices, unnecessary permanent closing of small
18 post offices and unjustified closing or
19 consolidation of stations and branches.

20 With all the cutbacks in personnel,
21 it is doubtful that adequate oversight to ensure
22 postal district compliance with Federal law and
23 the Postal Service's own guidelines will be
24 conducted by Postal Headquarters.

25 Also, with the drastic changes and

1 reductions in personnel, there will be many
2 field managers entrusted with the closing or
3 consolidation of post offices in need of
4 appropriate training.

5 It is extremely vital to have
6 adequate oversight and well-trained management
7 personnel to ensure all applicable rules and
8 guidelines are followed.

9 It is reasonable and critical that
10 postal lessors, postal customers and all
11 affected employees receive fair treatment when
12 their facilities are being considered for
13 closing or consolidation.

14 Following are specific concerns we
15 have: Overly zealous postal managers should not
16 be allowed to selectively enforce terms and
17 rules so as to justify the closing or
18 consolidating a facility in order to comply with
19 demands to cut costs.

20 For example, there have been several
21 lists of stations and branches being considered
22 for closing or consolidation over the last few
23 months, ranging from about 3,000, 1,000, 740,
24 and most recently, 413. This haphazard approach
25 has created unneeded anxiety for much of our

1 membership who consider themselves partners with
2 the Postal Service, as well as extremely poor
3 public relations with postal customers.

4 A significant number of the post
5 offices on the lists have many years to go
6 before leases expire, and they do not contain
7 termination clauses.

8 Lessors are afraid that Postal
9 Service is a Government entity and it can
10 somehow violate the terms of the lease and close
11 or consolidate the facilities.

12 A facility should not be closed or
13 consolidated because of building deficiencies or
14 for needed repairs without the lessor being
15 advised and given reasonable opportunity to take
16 corrective action.

17 Lessors should be provided with all
18 documentation used to justify the closing or
19 consolidation before the actual event. The
20 lessor should be able to review and comment on
21 the documentation, including the concerns and
22 comments of customers discussed at community
23 meetings and/or on questionnaires, and submit
24 their comments to the Postal Service for
25 consideration before the Postal Service actually

1 discontinues a facility.

2 When the Postal Service evaluates a
3 facility, the criteria used to justify its
4 actions should include the potential revenue
5 that will be lost, post office box fees,
6 parcels, money orders, overnight mail, proof of
7 delivery return receipts and other specialty
8 services.

9 We assume customers who regularly use
10 Postal Service package services will switch to
11 other package delivery companies as a result of
12 the closing or consolidation. The loss would
13 most likely be permanent.

14 The potential impact of lost revenue
15 on neighboring businesses due to the huge drop
16 off in walk-in revenue should be considered when
17 a post office is closed or consolidated.

18 Customers' concerns should be taken
19 into account in the decision-making process. A
20 significant number of lower revenue-producing
21 offices are located in impoverished sections of
22 a city. Many such are elderly, have not had the
23 educational opportunities that most of us have,
24 they do not drive, they do not have checking
25 accounts and they use the postal money orders to

1 pay bills, and they walk to the post office.

2 They aren't likely to log onto a
3 computer and use the computer or other services
4 that the Postal Service says is available, and
5 is available to customers. Closing their post
6 office would be a major hardship to residents.

7 I would like to enter a copy of a
8 forthcoming newsletter we will be sending to our
9 members for inclusion in the record, which I
10 have placed in front of Commissioner Blair's
11 desk. We believe the Commission should be aware
12 of its contents.

13 Additionally, I would like to enter
14 letters from lessors having facilities in Ohio
15 who could not attend today. One in particular
16 was referred to by Mr. Grant, the Dueber station
17 in Canton, Ohio, it's very detailed, and it
18 really explains what I am trying to say today.

19 Additionally, the Commission will
20 soon be receiving letters from further Ohio
21 comments, lessor comments and concerns by mail.

22 Clearly, the United States Post
23 Office is a vital presence in the community.
24 Therefore, it is crucial to consider all the
25 ramifications of closing or consolidating of

1 facilities. Americans are willing to give up a
2 lot of things, but the post office is not high
3 on the list of sacrifices they are willing to
4 make.

5 The residents, we would be better
6 served if the building were used to perform a
7 variety of Federal agency functions, such as the
8 distribution of important documents and
9 information to everyone.

10 Additionally, with the closing of
11 postal facilities, understaffing at some retail
12 outlets and the removal of 150,000 or so
13 collection boxes, it appears that the Postal
14 Service is making it harder and harder for
15 customers to do business with them. The more
16 customers perceive using the Postal Service to
17 be inconvenient, the more they will seek
18 alternatives to using the U.S. Mail.

19 Also, it appears to us, the Postal
20 Service assumes mail volume will never improve,
21 which is self-defeating.

22 Our organization is very concerned
23 about the unjustified emergency suspension of
24 small post offices as a means to immediately
25 save money. However, since this hearing deals

1 with stations and branches, perhaps I can meet
2 with the Commission at a later date concerning
3 small post office issues.

4 In conclusion, AUSPL believes the
5 Postal Service is unduly criticized as being
6 inefficient by many people. Postmaster General
7 Potter indicated that the Postal Service would
8 have shown a profit in 2007 and 2008 if it were
9 not for the legal requirement on how they
10 pre-fund retirees' health benefits.

11 How many large companies and private
12 industries have shown a profit in the last two
13 years?

14 There is no doubt that Postal Service
15 needs some relief or flexibility on its required
16 payment schedule. And as indicated by
17 Commissioner Acton, I guess we've got some
18 temporary relief there.

19 The Postal Service belongs to the
20 American people, and the American people should
21 not be penalized because of this change.

22 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Thank you,
23 Mr. Precipe. You covered a wide range of issues
24 there.

25 Just for the record, for those of you

1 who are interested, with regard to the issue of
2 reducing mail delivery from six to five days,
3 should the Postal Service proceed with that
4 concept, the law requires them to come to the
5 Commission for an advisory opinion, just as they
6 are coming to us for this opinion.

7 So if they do proceed with that, we
8 would all have an opportunity to explore that
9 issue and the impacts of that issue.

10 It is interesting that so many of you
11 see the combined impact of the two of them. But
12 should the Postal Service proceed, that would be
13 a separate hearing. But the Commission would
14 certainly entertain its responsibilities and
15 seek public comment in that regard.

16 If I may take the prerogative of the
17 chair and just ask Mr. Keane a question. I was
18 really moved by what you had to say.

19 But again, I think our responsibility
20 as a Commission is to advise the Postal Service
21 on how it can make decisions about this in a
22 systematic fashion.

23 What is the way in which you measure
24 the impact to a community of closing a Postal
25 Service or measure the economic value to the

1 community of the Postal Service separate from
2 the revenue that the Postal Service gets from
3 the stamps it sells there? Are there things
4 that we should be looking at, ways in which we
5 can get information like that? Does the owner
6 of your shopping center have suggestions? How
7 do we proceed?

8 **MR. KEANE:** I would think,
9 Madam Chair, that you guys would be doing a lot
10 of traveling, if you really wanted to know. I
11 mean, you don't know the impact of a post office
12 until you are in the community, I think, talking
13 to the people or until you hold the hearings and
14 actually allow people to come in and speak.

15 But certainly, all of us have
16 opinions or, you know, we all fight for our
17 neighborhoods, every day.

18 As I said, Ward 21, from all the
19 census data, the Federal Census data, even that
20 wouldn't be able to tell the Postal Regulatory
21 Commission what that post office does.

22 You know, I have been going to our
23 post office for a long time. I grew up in the
24 neighborhood. I am still there and raising my
25 children there. I can tell you that there is a

1 line. And when I go to the main post office on
2 Orange or even on the eastern edge of the
3 neighborhood which I represent, there isn't.

4 So I don't know. You can't look at
5 volume when there are four tellers sitting
6 there, you know, generating more revenue than
7 the one teller in Kamm's Plaza or in, you know,
8 the Lee Harvard area represented by Councilman
9 Pruitt. It's a small storefront. It is part of
10 the community.

11 I do not envy the advisory opinion
12 which you are tasked to generate, because, you
13 know, it is not black and white. It isn't. You
14 can't look at how many stamps they sold in Ward
15 21 and say, "Oop, you didn't make it. Sorry,
16 Kamm's."

17 You know, and we do have data that I
18 would be more than happy -- and again, I didn't
19 prepare written remarks, but I do imagine that
20 between the development corporation, which we
21 work closely together to generate the business
22 interests in the west side of the City of
23 Cleveland and the City of Cleveland as a whole.
24 I mean, every neighborhood is almost represented
25 on the list of affected, or at least post

1 offices which are to be scrutinized.

2 You have the Collinwood area, which
3 is receiving, you know, tremendous investment,
4 both by the City of Cleveland and through the
5 Federal Government and the stimulus money.

6 Our Edgewater area is just being
7 rejuvenated with an arts district and with --
8 you know, and I understand that you can't get
9 embroiled in those specifics. You can't. How
10 do you make a decision if you are looking at
11 every individual post office and the assets
12 which they provide -- the asset that it is in
13 that neighborhood?

14 So I understand it is difficult, but
15 the foot traffic, we can tell you how many
16 people walk into the plaza, we can tell you --
17 you know, you don't have the vacancies that you
18 do in other parts of the city or the region or
19 the county or the nation.

20 You know, that is a testament to
21 people are still coming and staying without the
22 big box, without the suburbanization, without,
23 you know, the flight in our urban, strong urban
24 areas. And Kamm's Corners, Lee Miles,
25 Collinwood, Edgewater, Detroit Shoreway, these

1 don't mean anything to the Regulatory
2 Commission. I wish they would, but I am not
3 that green.

4 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** But perhaps the
5 owners of the centers or the economic
6 development people that you work with in
7 Cleveland --

8 **MR. KEANE:** Sure.

9 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** -- and these areas
10 could share with us the criteria they use for
11 valuing a post office in that community. That
12 might be helpful.

13 **MR. KEANE:** Okay.

14 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** I think you are
15 absolutely right, it is not going to be possible
16 for us to do it, and the Postal Service
17 ultimately makes these decisions on its own.

18 We just want to make sure that they
19 make the decision in a way that is most
20 responsible for universal service. And I think
21 you have touched on some potential areas for
22 information. And if you could offer those up to
23 us, I would really appreciate it.

24 **MR. KEANE:** Absolutely. I
25 mean, any information -- data rules. You know,

1 numbers run neighborhoods, run cities, run
2 countries. We can lay our hearts on the line
3 for the communities that we represent. But at
4 the end of the day, a decision has to be made.
5 And I realize that. Which I will do everything
6 I can to provide substance to my argument.

7 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** We really
8 appreciate that.

9 **MR. KEANE:** Thank you, Madam
10 Chair.

11 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Do other
12 commissioners want to take the microphone?

13 **MS. LANGLEY:** I just want to say
14 that we are --

15 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Commissioner
16 Langley?

17 **MS. LANGLEY:** -- honored to have
18 this panel, because I think you have all put a
19 personal face onto the dilemma that, one, the
20 Postal Service is facing in light of reduced
21 revenue and volume, and that the Commission is
22 facing in determining whether or not the Postal
23 Service indeed is following the appropriate
24 process, you know, particularly public process,
25 in closing post offices.

1 I was very interested to hear that
2 Kamm's Plaza is doing well. The same thing with
3 Councilman Pruitt's shopping area. These are
4 critical lynchpins in your community, and there
5 is this recurring theme that local stations and
6 branches serve an important role in communities.

7 And I really don't have a question,
8 because it is building upon what Chairman
9 Goldway said. You know, one, there needs to be
10 some sort of criteria to balance the Postal
11 Service's determination of ratio between revenue
12 and the cost savings that they might realize.

13 Mr. Grant mentioned a station that --
14 let's see, where was it? It was a station that
15 you put down a monetary figure. And, you know,
16 how do we balance these decisions? Or how does
17 the Postal Service balance these decisions? And
18 that was one of my questions to the previous
19 panel, was, you know, what criteria, if at all,
20 is used? You know, how do you determine, how is
21 the Postal Service determining the economic
22 value of a facility?

23 So while I don't have a specific
24 question, I just want to thank you all for your
25 participation in our public hearing.

1 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Mark?

2 **MR. ACTON:** I have a process
3 question for Councilman Keane. President Grant
4 spoke a bit about his impression of the input
5 that the Service uses in making these decisions,
6 and I am wondering if your office has had any
7 interaction with the Service about this process
8 aside from your discussions with Goldie. Try to
9 put aside your vested interest in this
10 particular station and talk about the process.

11 **MR. KEANE:** Well, there
12 hasn't -- I haven't been contacted by anyone,
13 other than Congressman Kucinich's staff, and
14 that was, I think, by happenstance when we were
15 both engaged in a conversation with the Greater
16 Cleveland Regional Transportation Authority.

17 So I don't know if he was thinking
18 that he needed somebody from the neighborhood to
19 speak or if we just ran into each other as he
20 was engaged in the discussion with your staff.

21 But I haven't been contacted by
22 anyone, and to my knowledge, neither has the
23 Development Corporation, which, again, is our
24 Chamber of Commerce, nor the property manager
25 for Kamm's Plaza.

1 **MR. ACTON:** Has your office
2 contacted the Service in this respect?

3 **MR. KEANE:** Not as it pertains
4 to Kamm's Plaza. I did write a letter on
5 behalf, when the airport, when there was a
6 discussion that the Airport Post Office was
7 going to close.

8 **MR. ACTON:** What is the nature
9 of the data that you referenced?

10 **MR. KEANE:** Data?

11 **MR. ACTON:** The data. You said
12 you have data that you could share.

13 **MR. KEANE:** I wish I did today.
14 I said, that's what I am going to do everything
15 I can to get, yes.

16 **MR. ACTON:** Thank you.

17 **MR. KEANE:** If it's foot
18 traffic, if it's, you know, occupied
19 storefronts, if it's anything. I know that
20 that's the substance that you need.

21 **MR. ACTON:** Right.

22 **MR. KEANE:** I realize that.

23 **MR. ACTON:** I appreciate that.

24 And, Ms. Rosado, referencing your
25 study, there is background data for that, I

1 would imagine, you are presenting some summary
2 data?

3 **MS. ROSADO:** Again, we were
4 given limited time. We had limited time to put
5 this information together.

6 Our Research Director happened to see
7 something online about the closings, and this
8 was a particular interest for him, and so
9 decided that maybe we could take a cursory look
10 at it and see what was going on.

11 What we were most concerned about was
12 the fact that there was no data for us to access
13 from the post office, from the Postal Service
14 side. And if the Postal Service can give the
15 criteria that they use, then we know what data
16 to look for.

17 To simply bandy about, we need data,
18 we need data, there is volumes of data about any
19 issue. So we need to know what it is we need to
20 look for. It's like knowing the question in
21 order to give the answer.

22 So we need to know, where do we get
23 that information from the Postal Service? And
24 apparently the Commission has not been given
25 that information. So, to give us a framework to

1 continue the research.

2 Our research was simply done by going
3 to the latest census data to find out what the
4 populations were and what the median income was,
5 because knowing Ohio as we do, in particular
6 Cleveland, where our main office is located, we
7 know the neighborhoods just by looking at the
8 ZIP codes; and knowing that these were
9 low-income areas, knowing that these were areas
10 that have lost population, knowing that these
11 are areas that have a high concentration of
12 elderly, and knowing that their post office is
13 an anchor, not only for business, but for some
14 stability in that community. And so that was
15 the initial lens through which we were looking
16 that caused us to do the research.

17 But we definitely need to have access
18 to what the Postal Service uses as its criteria
19 for economic development, for loss of
20 population, for concentrations of elderly who
21 might have mobility problems in getting to a new
22 location.

23 So that information is critical to
24 have to know what kind of data you need.

25 **MR. ACTON:** Okay. Thank you.

1 And, Mr. Principe, just a
2 clarification. You mentioned the legislative
3 effort by the U.S. House of Representatives on
4 the unfunded liabilities front. And just to be
5 clear, the Senate still needs to consider the
6 matter and the President needs to sign the
7 legislation, so there are a couple important
8 steps remaining.

9 **MR. PRINCIPE:** Yeah. Well, I
10 realized that, but it is a good step forward.
11 Thank you.

12 **MR. ACTON:** Thank you.

13 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Commissioner Blair?

14 **MR. BLAIR:** Are we live? Yes,
15 we are.

16 I have a question for our panel
17 regarding Mr. Lipker's testimony in the previous
18 panel. He was the Postal Service
19 representative. And I don't know if you had a
20 chance to listen to him describe the process
21 that was invoked when they closed the Rolling
22 Hills facility in Akron.

23 But I wanted to get your impressions
24 of that process that they used. He seemed to
25 showcase this as a best practice for the Postal

1 Service and how it went through. And I wanted
2 to get your thoughts if this is something
3 that -- what your thoughts were about the
4 process that they employed.

5 **MS. ROSADO:** Just as a point of
6 information, though, I think in order to compare
7 apples to apples and oranges to oranges, this
8 particular case is about a post office inside a
9 mall that was declining, inside a mall that was
10 slated to close.

11 And so I think that is a little
12 different than just a neighborhood postal branch
13 or station.

14 So if a mall is going to go, you are
15 not going to leave a post office standing where
16 people are not coming, because it could be high
17 crime, it could be just not what people want to
18 do anymore.

19 So not to the process itself, but
20 that this is a different scenario.

21 **MR. GRANT:** Yeah, I would like
22 to make a comment. And I understand that, you
23 know, to make decisions, you have to have data
24 and you have to have this inputting and people
25 need a way to measure things, but I don't know

1 how you measure how much a postal station or a
2 post office means to a community.

3 You know, the founders of this
4 country established a universal postal system
5 with uniform rates for every citizen. He didn't
6 say, "Okay, if you live in New York and downtown
7 New York, you know, you can mail your mail for X
8 amount of cents, but if you live in Alaska, it's
9 going to cost you more because you live out in
10 the middle of nowhere." I mean, it said
11 universal service at uniform rates. That's the
12 guarantee of every citizen in this country.

13 And while, you know, believe me, I
14 want nothing more than the Postal Service to
15 succeed, and I understand about cost containment
16 and things like that and the unfunded liability
17 that is really an anchor around the Postal
18 Service; but I don't think there is any data or
19 any way you can measure how much having a post
20 office in a community means to that community
21 other than possibly going there and talking to
22 everybody that goes into the post office.

23 But, you know, I think some -- I
24 think the bigger question will eventually
25 become, is the post office, is the Postal

1 Service a service or is it a business? And, you
2 know, so far the Constitution says it will be a
3 universal service at uniform rates.

4 So, you know, I just -- I have a real
5 hard time reconciling the fact that they say,
6 "Well, you know" -- I understand they are losing
7 money and we are in difficult times, but I think
8 in those times is the times you step forward,
9 not step back.

10 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** I certainly
11 appreciate your comments. But while Mr. Grant
12 has the microphone, we might want to sort of get
13 back to Commissioner Blair's comment, because
14 when you were testifying, I thought about it.

15 The Postal Service says it has a
16 process for notifying the community and it used
17 the Rolling Hills Mall as an example. But you,
18 in your testimony, seemed to indicate that in
19 the offices designated for closing, at least
20 that part of the process that included notifying
21 employees was not -- did not occur.

22 Do you have any way of knowing
23 whether other parts of the process occurred, and
24 that employees were just ignored, or whether, in
25 fact, that process is not occurring at many of

1 these designated postal facilities?

2 **MR. GRANT:** I called and talked
3 to all local presidents in the seven cities that
4 I mentioned in my written testimony, and it was
5 kind of a hit-or-miss thing.

6 In some of them, they knew, they had
7 been informed by the Postal Service and they
8 were aware of the Postal Service doing the other
9 things to inform the local community about
10 things. But in other ones, like I mentioned, in
11 Canton and Toledo, they told me they learned
12 about it, one in the newspaper and one on
13 broadcast media.

14 So, you know, it was followed to a
15 certain extent in some places, but not in
16 others. I don't have an explanation for why it
17 wasn't done in all cases. You know, I don't
18 know if it is a communications problem between
19 the organizations or not. But it doesn't seem
20 to be consistently followed in all cases.

21 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Could you and your
22 union at least get us more information about
23 where you know it has been followed and where it
24 hasn't? Maybe that might --

25 **MR. GRANT:** Sure, I can do

1 that.

2 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** That might help us
3 to guide the Postal Service on ensuring more
4 uniform processing --

5 **MR. GRANT:** I would be happy to
6 do that.

7 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** -- uniform
8 application of the processing.

9 **MR. GRANT:** Certainly.

10 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Thank you. Now, I
11 think somebody else wanted to comment.

12 **MR. PRINCIPE:** Yes. As part of
13 the evaluation process is the questionnaires or
14 community meeting. Now, the Postal Service's
15 guidelines or to the field managers are to
16 conduct a community meeting and/or distribute
17 questionnaires.

18 Now, what is the criteria whether you
19 have -- you know, how do you make a decision on
20 whether you have a community meeting or
21 questionnaires? What do the questionnaires say?
22 How do you distribute the questionnaires?

23 For example, one of the letters I
24 submitted for the record in the Canton, Ohio,
25 Dueber station, the lessor -- who happens to

1 live in California, so he couldn't be here -- he
2 has in his testimony that he had questionnaires
3 printed out. He reproduced the Postal Service's
4 questionnaires because they ran out of them in
5 the lobby, and they even distributed them in the
6 neighborhood.

7 So consistency is what is a major
8 concern with all the problems I indicated
9 previously about oversight and the shortage of
10 trained personnel, one district may do this,
11 another district that.

12 We think that all people, all
13 customers should be treated the same, should
14 get -- the information should be the same so
15 that you can get concrete answers to all the
16 things you are looking for.

17 If you don't have the same questions
18 on a questionnaire for Office A as you have on
19 Office B, how can you make a comparison? How
20 can you tell -- how can you weigh the input of
21 the customers if some of the customers'
22 questions are irrelevant or don't address the
23 issue? So that's it. That's what I have to say
24 on it.

25 **MR. BLAIR:** I just have a quick

1 follow-up on my question.

2 It seems to me that the witnesses
3 from the previous panel, except for Mr. Lipker,
4 and I don't mean to exclude him, but when I
5 asked my question about distinguishing between
6 station, branches and post offices, it seems to
7 me no one, apart from the Postal Service
8 administrators, seem to recognize that
9 difference.

10 And if the public doesn't perceive a
11 difference in that, my question then is, should
12 the same procedures that apply to closing post
13 offices apply to the station and branches?

14 Mr. Principe, in your testimony, you
15 seemed to indicate that they should.

16 And so my next question is, are
17 those -- if you are going to say that those
18 procedures should apply, are they even
19 sufficient? And I just wanted to get your -- if
20 we are going to look at --

21 **MR. PRINCIPE:** The procedures for
22 closing a small post office? I think you
23 couldn't ask for a better situation for the
24 customers, provided the Postal Service follows
25 the rules. The Postal Service, by Federal law,

1 cannot discontinue a post office just for
2 financial considerations. They are not allowed
3 to do that.

4 The only difference -- what
5 difference is it of a station or branch, as I
6 indicated previously, especially, I would
7 assume, I am making an assumption, I don't have
8 any facts, that most of the stations or branches
9 under consideration would be low-revenue
10 offices.

11 And also, in those low-revenue
12 offices, a high percentage of the customers
13 would have more need for the post office, the
14 impoverished areas where the revenue is less for
15 the Postal Service, but the residents and
16 customers have more need for the hands-on
17 dealings of the Postal Service in the community.
18 They need that post office in the community.

19 And not only do they need the post
20 office there, it is the backbone of the
21 business. If the post office leaves, the
22 community identity goes, other businesses will
23 go by the wayside. Just the same thing as in a
24 small community. There is no difference.

25 **MR. BLAIR:** That is the input I

1 wanted.

2 **MR. PRINCIPE:** That is my opinion,
3 of course.

4 **MR. BLAIR:** And that is what
5 was solicited, so I appreciate it very much.

6 Does any other panelist want to make
7 a comment on that?

8 **MS. ROSADO:** Nothing but to
9 agree, absolutely, in a low-income area. And in
10 particular, in a few of the areas where they
11 have public housing, the post office is
12 absolutely key, because a lot of people do not,
13 especially elderly, trust that their mail is
14 going to be safe and secure, delivered, and they
15 would rather go to the post office and get their
16 mail. They would rather have a post office box
17 where their mail can be delivered to for
18 security reasons.

19 And again, people just feel that
20 intrinsic value of that Government entity, being
21 there in their neighborhood, that just as has
22 been said before, means their neighborhood
23 matters. When that is lost, I think somebody
24 else referred to it, its hope is lost.

25 I mean, the Government post office,

1 which is everywhere for everybody, is not in our
2 neighborhood. What does that say about our
3 neighborhood? What does that say about the
4 perception of our neighborhood?

5 **MR. BLAIR:** Thank you.

6 **MR. GRANT:** When I first heard
7 about this, that was my immediate assumption,
8 too, that, well, they must be trying to close
9 stations in the economically depressed areas of
10 cities, but that's not always the case.

11 I am sure that the post office here
12 in Independence is probably a pretty high-volume
13 station. And the one office in Mansfield, Ohio,
14 that they are trying to -- or considered for
15 closing had revenue in '08 of \$698,000. So that
16 is not a low-revenue station.

17 And I have the figures right here. I
18 would be glad to provide them to the Commission.

19 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Absolutely.

20 **MR. GRANT:** So it is not just a
21 fact that, well, they are only in economically
22 depressed areas, because I found out just
23 through those two that those are pretty
24 high-revenue areas.

25 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Commissioner

1 Hammond, do you have any follow-up questions?

2 **MR. HAMMOND:** Because of the time
3 and because I, as you know, tend to be kind of
4 repetitive, I will forego any more questions.

5 But I would like to thank each and
6 every one of you for putting such a personal
7 effort into what you have done in providing your
8 testimony.

9 And, you know, like Mr. Giesler says,
10 when you hear people say things like "A sign of
11 hope," "Neighborhood identity," "The last place
12 the flag is flying," that, you know, has got to
13 have an effect on people. So I appreciate all
14 of you being here today and providing us with
15 what you have. So that is all I have.

16 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** And I will just
17 second Commissioner Hammond in thanking all of
18 you.

19 And noticing the time, we do have a
20 couple of people who want to speak for the
21 opening -- the open part of the program.

22 If you have other materials,
23 information based on the questions that we have
24 asked you, other people in your community and
25 your associations who would like to provide more

1 material, we would greatly appreciate it.

2 In particular, when I have asked
3 questions about more data or information, if you
4 would contact our Director of Public Affairs,
5 Ann Fisher over there, she will set up a
6 dialogue for you with some of our statisticians
7 and economists, and perhaps we can develop a
8 better record and a better way to move forward,
9 because I think you have given us some very
10 important ideas, and I really appreciate it very
11 much.

12 So with that, if you wouldn't mind, I
13 would like you to leave the table and ask if
14 there are any people in the audience who would
15 like to say a few words? And I agreed that I
16 would give Senator Kucinich's representative the
17 first opportunity to speak with us. As you can
18 tell, he has been very important in facilitating
19 this hearing and raising these issues for us.

20 **MR. GELFAND:** Thank you,
21 Chairman.

22 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Would you give us
23 your name, please, as well, for the record?

24 **MR. GELFAND:** Yes. Chairman
25 Goldway, commissioners, Councilman Keane,

1 Councilman Pruitt, members of the audience,
2 public, my name is Marty Gelfand. I am Senior
3 Counsel to Congressman Dennis Kucinich.

4 And to Commissioner Blair, I would
5 just like to say that I pay my bills with the
6 U.S. Postal Service first-class mail. And
7 recently, having gotten married and the birth of
8 a child, we sent out invitations and
9 announcements and thank-you cards with
10 first-class U.S. Mail.

11 **MR. BLAIR:** Sir, the Postal
12 Service thanks you.

13 **THE REPORTER:** Could you spell
14 your last name, please?

15 **MR. GELFAND:** G-e-l-f-a-n-d.

16 I appreciate the hard work of the
17 Commission and working with your Staff Director.
18 (Thereupon, a discussion was held off
19 the record.)

20 **MR. GELFAND:** On behalf of
21 Congressman Kucinich, I would like to thank the
22 Commission and your Staff Director, Ann Fisher,
23 for being very diligent and following up with me
24 and others to make this possible.

25 Congressman Kucinich regrets that he

1 can't be here himself today. He is in
2 Washington. Today is a legislative day and he
3 has his own subcommittee that he is chairing on
4 a hearing today. But he did want me to read
5 this letter that he sent to you. I think you
6 have the original, Chairman Goldway.

7 "Dear Chairwoman Goldway: Thank you
8 for holding field hearings about the U.S. Postal
9 Service's plan to close post office branches in
10 Ohio and elsewhere around the country. I
11 appreciate the Postal Regulatory Commission's
12 commitment to universal access to postal
13 services and coming to Independence, in Ohio's
14 10th Congressional District to hear from the
15 people who will be affected by any post office
16 closings.

17 "As you know, the USPS is considering
18 14 branch offices for closure in the Greater
19 Cleveland area, including 4 in Ohio's 10th
20 District. I have serious concerns about the
21 process that the USPS uses to decide which
22 branches will be closed.

23 "There is a history of a lack of
24 communication between labor and management.
25 Workers often see approaches to achieve more

1 efficient operations in their work environment
2 which management might miss. Failure to
3 effectively communicate with workers could blind
4 the USPS to possible efficiencies and other
5 improvements that would result in helping to
6 keep branches open. For example, the union
7 leadership and USPS management recently had deep
8 disagreements about the fate of the Airport Mail
9 Facility, which was an excellent facility for
10 handling mail. It was only after my
11 intervention at a Congressional hearing that the
12 USPS agreed to keep the retail portion of the
13 AMF Cleveland open.

14 "I am also concerned about the
15 effects of post office closures on those who
16 depend on USPS universal services the most. In
17 particular, seniors and people of modest incomes
18 are vulnerable because of their lack of access
19 to transportation and the Internet. But when I
20 raised concerns about the closures in a letter
21 to Postmaster General John Potter, I received an
22 August 20th, 2009, reply stating that the Postal
23 Service will not consider any demographic
24 information about the customers that utilize the
25 facilities under review. I have enclosed the

1 letter for your reference. We cannot protect
2 universal access to essential services if we do
3 not know who the facility in question is
4 serving.

5 "As the Postal Service moves forward
6 with any plans to close local post office retail
7 facilities, it must ensure that each post office
8 and its relevant community are afforded a
9 thorough examination of the impact on the people
10 in their service areas. In addition, I
11 encourage the Postal Service to seek input from
12 and work with local unions to ensure that
13 universal access to the services provided to the
14 local community remains intact.

15 "Please do not hesitate to contact my
16 staff or me if you have any questions or wish to
17 continue this conversation.

18 "Sincerely, Dennis J. Kucinich,
19 Member of Congress."

20 And I would like to add one thing.
21 It was kind of funny, because I was reaching for
22 the enclosure for the letter, and accidentally I
23 grabbed this other -- this press release, July
24 13th, 2009. And what jumped out at me when I
25 looked at it again was that the Airport station,

1 which was promised to remain open, is now on the
2 list of those being closed.

3 So at a subcommittee hearing, we
4 learned that the airport, at least the retail
5 facility at the airport would remain open. Now
6 we are seeing that it is going to be closed.

7 At this hearing we were told -- and I
8 don't know if Ron White is still here, but at
9 this hearing we were told that the Independence
10 Post Office would remain open, but once the
11 hearing is over and the next press release comes
12 out, we don't know whether that is going to
13 happen.

14 We do know that we need to see what
15 criteria are being used to make these decisions,
16 and we do await information about what is being
17 done.

18 And I want to add one other thing
19 about the Airport station. Councilman Keane,
20 you know, spoke eloquently about the Kamm's
21 Corners station, which is just about a mile,
22 maybe two miles from the Airport station. The
23 Kamm's Corners station is in Ward 21, and the
24 Airport station is in Ward 20.

25 One could walk from one station to

1 the other. It may take you a little while. You
2 probably couldn't do it if, you know, you were
3 maybe one of the seniors or persons with
4 disabilities who use the post offices. But, I
5 mean, I could certainly walk from one to the
6 other with not too much hassle.

7 So they are very close to each other.
8 You take both of them away, people in that part
9 of town aren't going to have any service.

10 There will be one West Park station
11 that was recently renamed for a great hero, a
12 World War II veteran and a city employee for
13 many years, John Gallagher, but that is on the
14 eastern end of West Park. So it is actually
15 quite far from both the Kamm's Corners station
16 and the Airport station.

17 So, and the other thing about the
18 Airport station I wanted to mention is that it
19 is the one facility that is open late. So if
20 someone needs to put -- you know, to get
21 something in the mail right away and get that
22 postmark on it because the IRS is looking for
23 something or their creditors are after them to
24 pay their bills and not get penalties and fines,
25 they won't be able to do it at the Airport

1 station anymore, and that's the only place in
2 the Cleveland area that they can go late to get
3 something in the mail.

4 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Thank you. I
5 appreciate your comments. There is one other
6 person, I think, who wants to speak. Would you
7 identify yourself?

8 **MR. CINADR:** I will.

9 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Thank you,
10 Mr. Gelfand.

11 **MR. GELFAND:** You are welcome.
12 Thank you.

13 **MR. CINADR:** I want to thank you
14 for this opportunity and thank you for being
15 here. My name is Joseph Cinadr.

16 **THE REPORTER:** Could you spell
17 that for me?

18 **MR. CINADR:** C-i-n-a-d-r.

19 I spent 43 years with the Postal
20 Service, 20 years as Postmaster of Mansfield,
21 Ohio, and 4 years as the National President of
22 the National League of Postmasters.

23 I asked for time today because we
24 faced a very similar situation while I was
25 National President of the League, insofar as we

1 found out that there were 500-plus small post
2 offices and some fairly large post offices that
3 had been closed under emergency provisions, and
4 they were still officially listed in the ZIP
5 code book as functioning post offices.

6 By working with the League and with
7 NAPUS, the other Postmaster organization, we
8 were able to resolve that problem, with the help
9 of Congressman John McHugh and Senator Akaka
10 from Hawaii.

11 We did finally reach an agreement and
12 I was signature to that agreement with the post
13 office on how future closings of post offices
14 would be handled.

15 To address the question, a post
16 office has a Postmaster. That is the
17 difference. Stations and branches were clearly
18 defined, but a post office has a Postmaster.

19 And if you talk to customers of small
20 post offices, you will find that they love their
21 Postmaster.

22 I think, in addressing this question,
23 there have been studies by Pitney Bowes on some
24 of the questions that you asked, Chairman
25 Goldway, on the demographics of use of the mail,

1 and they might still have those studies or they
2 still might be relevant.

3 I think the other thing has been
4 addressed, but I would like to emphasize it, and
5 that is that the post office is the face of the
6 Government. We not only deliver and process
7 mail, but we issue passports, we register for
8 the draft, we provide the American public with
9 IRS forms and other Government information.

10 And I think if anything, the post
11 office is underutilized. I think there are
12 other Government services that could be funneled
13 through post offices.

14 Too many times as a Postmaster and as
15 a postal employee I felt frustration, because it
16 seemed that the post office had to jump through
17 way too many hoops to introduce new services,
18 and many times I believe we were told, "Well,
19 you can't do that because you would be in
20 competition with private industry."

21 Being a postal employee, I believe
22 the opposite should be true. If you are the
23 constitutional organization mandated to provide
24 uniform prices and universal service, you should
25 be the agency that is allowed to introduce new

1 products and service to the American public.

2 On another subject, if you want to
3 know that a community or a part of a city is
4 dead, take away its post office.

5 And I would refer you to New Lyme,
6 Ohio. The last two standing businesses in New
7 Lyme, Ohio, was the post office and the gas
8 station across the street. When the gas station
9 closed and there was no longer a restroom in
10 town for the Postmaster to use, the New Lyme
11 post office was closed. And the New Lyme
12 community is gone.

13 I have many other things I could add.
14 I just ask you to remember that there are
15 experts in the community. I am sorry I didn't
16 find out about this hearing until just a couple
17 days ago. But I would offer my expertise and
18 knowledge to this Commission and anyone else
19 dealing with this problem. Thank you very much.

20 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Thank you very much
21 for your participation. I am glad that you did
22 find out about it, and I hope that you will
23 submit any other information that you have in
24 writing and any other suggestions you have for
25 us to pursue further ideas.

1 We do have an obligation, I think, to
2 make an advisory opinion sooner than later. We
3 are not going to delay this process. So the
4 sooner that we can hear from you and the other
5 participants, the better as far as we are
6 concerned. But again, we thank you all for your
7 participation.

8 I want to thank my fellow
9 commissioners for coming up with really
10 interesting questions and developing this
11 community dialogue.

12 I hope you won't forget us. We are
13 the Postal Regulatory Commission in Washington,
14 D.C. We have a Web site. We have an outreach
15 officer. And regardless of the issue, this one
16 or others, we want to stay involved with the
17 community. Thank you very much. I hope you
18 have wonderful weather for the rest of the week.

19 (Thereupon, a discussion was held off
20 the record.)

21 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** I apologize. You
22 were sitting so politely. Please introduce
23 yourself and offer your comments.

24 Audience, could we give the last
25 participant your attention, please?

1 **MR. PRIDE:** Excuse me, ladies
2 and gentlemen. Okay. Good morning, ladies and
3 gentlemen, Chairman Goldway and fellow
4 commissioners. I apologize for this last
5 minute, but I will make it as brief as I can.

6 My name is Danny Pride. I am the
7 current President of the Cleveland Area Local
8 American Postal Workers Union, and I have been
9 the President for the past four years. I have
10 intimate knowledge about the issues here in
11 Cleveland, Ohio, and I just want to share some
12 of those with you.

13 I will start off by addressing where
14 Marty left off about the AMC. The AMC was a
15 very viable institution, not only financially,
16 but productionwise. On average, they staged
17 over 90 percent, 95 percent efficiency for the
18 processing of Priority and Express Mail.

19 Again, Deputy Postmaster Donahoe
20 promised at that Senate hearing that not only
21 would the AMC remain open, but they even
22 discussed extending the hours there at the AMC.
23 And now here we find ourselves with the
24 proposition that they may be closing it.

25 To go along with that, that 95

1 percent efficiency rate at the airport, when it
2 was transferred downtown, it dropped below 50
3 percent. And here, within the past couple of
4 weeks, they have had delays in the mail, at
5 least on one occasion, of over 2 million pieces
6 delayed.

7 The machinery at the downtown plant
8 was taken out because they were so efficient
9 downtown. And I say this here because if we
10 knew what the criteria was for closing these
11 stations and branches, we could address it, so
12 we know it's not simply finance. Okay. So we
13 concentrate on a combination of both service and
14 finance.

15 Kamm's Corners was mentioned.
16 Congressman Kucinich and I and the citizens
17 picketed Kamm's to keep it open. Kamm's
18 generated enough revenue to not only keep Kamm's
19 open, but also keep Jesse Owens open.

20 And a lot of us in here may not be
21 old enough to remember Jesse Owens, but just
22 think for a second what that means to that
23 community down there on 55th and Woodland, if
24 you are talking about closing Jesse Owens'
25 station and you have already reduced the hours

1 to four hours a day.

2 And they live -- the proximity of
3 that station is within a block of King Kennedy
4 high-rise, which is mostly elderly and
5 low-income people. They have cluster boxes
6 around. The cluster boxes are broken into from
7 time to time.

8 So a lot of those residents, they
9 prefer to purchase post office boxes, because at
10 least they know they can go there on the 1st of
11 the month and get their paychecks or their
12 pension checks or whatever it might be.

13 And we already have problems with
14 that situation, because it closes at 1:00. And
15 if for some reason they don't make it before
16 1:00, then they are out of luck.

17 Independence, you mentioned
18 Independence in here. I am delighted that
19 Independence will stay open. But even as of
20 this morning, I have discovered that they have
21 three employees there at Independence. They do
22 not belong there.

23 In other words, the staffing at the
24 station and branches have been cut so short that
25 they are creating these long lines at the

1 station branches.

2 There are three employees that are
3 currently at Independence this morning. They
4 are supposed to be working downtown. Downtown
5 is using overtime to cover for these employees.
6 Okay.

7 We try our best to work with the
8 Postal Service, but again, we have the same
9 problem you guys have. We want to know what the
10 criteria is. Okay.

11 In Ward 1 and formerly Ward 3, which
12 one of the councilman is here, those are in
13 predominantly black neighborhoods or minority
14 neighborhoods. If you were talking about
15 consolidating them into Shaker, you have
16 actually taken your station and branches out of
17 that section of the City of Cleveland, because
18 they already removed the mail processing from
19 Shaker out to Warrensville, and now they are
20 taking about taking Cranwood and moving it to
21 Shaker station.

22 So you are basically eliminating all
23 the service in those particular wards. And I
24 believe those wards are represented by
25 Congressman Fudge.

1 And we have already had to deal with
2 the situation of all the mailboxes being pulled
3 off the street. That created a lot of ill
4 feelings among the public, because not only are
5 you being denied postal service, universal
6 postal service, you ain't happy with them. You
7 have a neutral box. If you look in the City of
8 Cleveland here for mail boxes, you will have a
9 hard time.

10 Moving along.

11 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Yeah. We said just
12 a few minutes. So --

13 **MR. PRIDE:** Okay. I am going
14 to make this the last one. Even though I have
15 got five or six more, but I will make this the
16 last one.

17 The other one is, in accordance to
18 our national collective bargaining agreement,
19 the post office is prohibited from closing any
20 retail unit that is already in existence. So if
21 it's the Post Office's position that they are
22 going to violate our collective bargaining
23 agreement, we need to know that.

24 **CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY:** Thank you. And
25 again, if you have information you'd like to

1 give us in writing, given the short time we have
2 here, we certainly appreciate your having that.
3 Thank you very much for your attendance.

4 And I believe that is the last of the
5 audience who wishes to speak. Again, thank you
6 for your participation and I wish you all best
7 of luck and the Postal Service increased volume.
8 Thank you.

9 (Thereupon, the proceedings were
10 concluded at 4:03 o'clock p.m.)

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1 C E R T I F I C A T E

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STATE OF OHIO,)

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) SS:

SUMMIT COUNTY,)

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5

6 I, Mary Lyn Uphold, a Registered Diplomate
 7 Reporter, Certified Realtime Reporter and Notary
 8 Public within and for the State of Ohio, duly
 9 commissioned and qualified, do hereby certify
 10 that these proceedings were taken by me and
 11 reduced to Stenotypy, afterwards prepared and
 12 produced by means of Computer-Aided
 13 Transcription and that the foregoing is a true
 14 and correct transcription of the proceedings so
 15 taken as aforesaid.

16 I do further certify that these proceedings
 17 were taken at the time and place in the
 18 foregoing caption specified.

19 I do further certify that I am not a
 20 relative, employee of or attorney for any party
 21 or counsel, or otherwise financially interested
 22 in this action.

23 I do further certify that I am not, nor is
 24 the court reporting firm with which I am
 25 affiliated, under a contract as defined in Civil
 Rule 28(D).

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
 hand and affixed my seal of office at Akron,
 Ohio on this 23rd day of September, 2009.

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Mary Lyn Uphold, RDR, CRR

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My commission expires May 30, 2012.

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