

BEFORE THE  
POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, DC 20268-0001

ANNUAL COMPLIANCE REVIEW, 2015

Docket No. ACR2015

STEVE HUTKINS  
MOTION FOR ISSUANCE OF INFORMATION REQUEST

(January 20, 2016)

Pursuant to 39 C.F.R. § 3001.21(a), I respectfully request that the Presiding Officer issue an Information Request to obtain responses to the questions stated in this motion. I believe the responses would be beneficial in the Commission's important annual evaluation of the Postal Service's compliance with the provisions of 39 U.S.C. § 3652, and with the related regulations regarding Customer Access to Postal Services as set forth in 39 C.F.R. § 3055.91.

Most of these questions have been asked in previous ACD dockets, and asking them again will come as no surprise to the Postal Service. Questions 1 through 6 were asked in almost exactly this form during the 2014 Annual Compliance Determination review.<sup>1</sup> These questions, or versions of them, were also asked in previous ACD reviews as well.<sup>2</sup> Question 7, regarding Village Post

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<sup>1</sup> Docket ACR2014, Chairman's Information Request No. 1, issued January 9, 2015, Questions 14-21.

<sup>2</sup> See Docket ACR2013, Chairman's Information Request No. 1, issued January 3, 2014, Questions 3-8; Docket ACR2012, Chairman's Information Request No. 2, issued January 9, 2013, Questions 1 – 3, 5, 7; Docket ACR2011, Chairman's Information Request No. 1, issued January 19, 2012, Questions 27-28, and Request No. 2, issued January 31, 2012, Questions 25-26; Docket ACR2010, Chairman's Information Request No. 1, issued January 19, 2012; Docket ACR2009, Chairman's Information Request No. 3, issued January 29, 2010, Questions 6, 9.

Offices, is an extension of Question 2 regarding Contract Postal Units, and a version of this question was asked to beneficial effect as part of the compliance review for FY 2012.<sup>3</sup> Questions 8 and 9 seek basic clarification of data already provided with the FY 2015 ACR in Library Reference USPS-FY15-33.

The information elicited will assist the Commission and its staff in conducting core regulatory analysis, and it will also aid potential commenters in understanding and assessing customer access during the ACD review. Each question seeks useful, important information that has not yet been requested.

#### DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED QUESTIONS

Question 1, requesting data about emergency suspensions, is important. The Commission has repeatedly expressed concerns about unresolved lingering suspensions, and in last year's Compliance Report, the Commission noted that it has "*has previously recommended that the Postal Service proceed expeditiously in either discontinuing offices under suspension or reopening them.*"<sup>4</sup> The Report devotes over two pages to suspensions (pp. 119-121) and includes a table (V-19) that summarizes the reasons for the suspensions. The Commission's ACD Report for FY 2015 would be unable to provide a similar table and analysis if the Commission has only the data in Library Reference USPS-FY15-33 and does not request this additional information.

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<sup>3</sup> Docket ACR2012, Chairman's Information Requests No. 2, issued January 9, 2013, Question 4.

<sup>4</sup> Docket ACR2014, Annual Compliance Determination Report for FY 2014, p. 119.

Question 2, which requests data on contract postal units, is important because these facilities represent a significant, material portion of the Postal Service's retail network, and, as the Commission has on occasion pointed out, they are often a community's main source of customer access.

Question 3, regarding collection points, is valuable, as indicated by the fact that the Commission provided analysis of comparable data in the FY 2014 Annual Compliance Determination Report (p. 122 - 123), which also includes a table (V-22) showing the history of the number of collection points by type. Without the data requested in Question 3, the Commission would be unable to perform a similar analysis for FY 2015.

Questions 4 and 5 are important because they concern alternative access, which is discussed in the Annual Compliance Determination Report for FY 2014 (pp. 123-125). The Commission has on occasion pointed out the growing importance of alternative access. Table V-22 in the Report (p. 124) provides a breakdown of retail revenue by channel, which was based on the Response to ChIR No. 1, Question 18. The Commission will be unable to produce an analogous table for the ACD report for FY 2015 if it does not have the data requested in Question 5.

Question 6, seeking information about collection boxes, will help the Commission continue to monitor a key aspect of mail entry for the general public and small businesses, and to continue to chart changes over time. This data will also help monitor concerns that the Postal Service is altering collection times

nationally and regionally to ever-earlier final pickup times (sometimes in extremis) in order to meet service standards.

Question 7, regarding Village Post Offices, is warranted because the Postal Service has been growing its network of VPOs, and the VPOs are regularly cited by the Commission and the Postal Service as an important form of alternative access.<sup>6</sup>

Question 8 asks for an explanation of the sizable discrepancies and inconsistencies in the tables showing the total number of postal facilities in last year's ACR and this year's ACR. At present, it appears that the Excel sheet provided in Library Reference USPS-FY15-33 may contain significant errors. This question would provide the Commission and the Postal Service an opportunity to resolve this issue properly.

Question 9, regarding another Excel sheet in LR USPS-FY15-33, asks for an explanation of the terms used to describe modes of delivery, an explanation I have not been able to find in previous ACR dockets. This would greatly benefit the record in this proceeding by providing the Postal Service with a proper opportunity to clarify these terms.

Responding to these questions should not present a significant burden to the Postal Service. This type of information has been provided previously, and as far as I have been able to determine in reviewing previous dockets, it does not appear that the Postal Service has ever indicated that responding to these questions was burdensome. The type of information being requested here is already in the Postal

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<sup>6</sup> See, for example, the Annual Compliance Determination Report for FY 2014, p. 116.

Service's hands, as sound business practice would dictate, and it would be very surprising if the Postal Service did not have ready access to it.

None of the proposed questions would generate responses containing information of a highly sensitive commercial nature that would be harmful to the Postal Service or its operations were it made public. Rather, the Commission's past information requests suggest that this is routine and valuable regulatory data that imposes no material burden. By obtaining this information, it is included in the ACD docket record, and is available to the Commission and its staff as they do their analysis.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, omitting questions that have been asked in previous years may handicap Commission staff and could preclude the Commission from conducting due diligence on the customer access portion of the compliance review. As a result, while there is articulable harm in *not* asking the questions, there is no harm in asking them.

In conclusion, then, the information being requested here will enable the Commission to compare access in FY 2015 to previous years and to future years, which will become increasingly important as the Postal Service's network continues to evolve over time. This information will help the Commission and the public gauge the scope of customer access to postal services, to post offices, and

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<sup>7</sup> The information also becomes available to the public, and I use it and share it often in articles for my website, savethepostoffice.com. See, for example, "The Year in Review: The Postal Service submits its Annual Compliance Report for FY 2015," December 31, 2015, [<http://goo.gl/zdXiCz>], and "Postal Service releases post office closure and suspension lists for 2013," February 2, 2014 [<http://goo.gl/B1q10x>].

to alternative postal locations, and it would be invaluable in evaluating the Postal Service's performance with respect to the Universal Service Obligation.

## PROPOSED QUESTIONS FOR THE POSTAL SERVICE

1. Please provide an Excel spreadsheet showing all offices under suspension in FY 2015, including the following data for each such office:
  - a. Office Name
  - b. Office Type (PO, Station, Branch or other)
  - c. EAS-level or POSTPlan level, as applicable
  - d. City
  - e. State
  - f. Zip Code
  - g. Date Suspended
  - h. Date Reopened (if applicable)
  - i. Suspension Reason
  - j. Discontinuance Proposal Posting Date
  - k. Date of Community Meeting
  - l. Date of Posting of Final Determination to Discontinue (if applicable)
  
2. Please provide Excel spreadsheets including Office Name (or other appropriate identifier), Unit Type (Community Post Office (CPO) or Contract Postal Unit (CPU), Location (City and State), and 5-Digit ZIP Code for the following:
  - a. CPUs and CPOs in existence at the beginning of FY 2015
  - b. CPUs and CPOs newly established in FY 2015
  - c. CPUs and CPOs closed in FY 2015
  - d. CPUs and CPOs in existence at the end of FY 2015
  
3. Please provide a copy of the Collection Point Management System (CPMS) database as of the end of FY 2015.

4. How many Automated Postal Centers (APCs) were in operation as of the end of FY 2015? Please describe any formal plan(s) for the addition of more APCs during FY 2016.
5. Please provide (a) an update for FY 2015 of the table entitled, "Retail Revenue by Channel" as shown in Postal Service Response to CHIR No. 1, Question 18 (filed January 16, 2015); (b) a breakdown of the sources categorized as "Other"; and (c) revenues from Village Post Offices.
6. Please provide the proportion of collection boxes for which the last mail pick-up time is:
  - a. Midnight to 11:59 a.m.
  - b. Noon to 2:59 p.m.
  - c. 3:00 p.m. to 4:59 p.m.
  - d. 5:00 p.m. to 6:59 p.m.
  - e. 7:00 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.
7. Please provide Excel spreadsheets including the following information for Village Post Offices:
  - a. Village Post Office Name
  - b. DBA
  - c. Physical Location (Street address)
  - d. City
  - e. State
  - f. 5-Digit ZIP Code
  - g. Open Date
  - h. Closed Date
  - i. Reason for contract termination (if terminated)

Please provide the above information for:

- a. VPOs in existence at the beginning of FY 2015
  - b. VPOs newly established in FY 2015
  - c. VPOs closed in FY 2015
  - d. VPOs in existence at the end of FY 2015
8. In Library Reference USPS-FY15-33, the Postal Service provided a table showing the total number of post offices, stations/branches, and annexes at

the start of FY 2015 and at the end of FY 2015. For last year's ACR, the Postal Service provided a similar table showing the number of facilities at the start and end of FY 2014.<sup>8</sup> Here are the two tables:

**Post Offices - FY 2014**

| <b>Area</b>   | <b>Office Type</b> | <b>Total at Start of Fiscal Year</b> | <b>Closings During Fiscal Year</b> | <b>Total at End of Fiscal Year</b> |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Capital Metro | Post Offices       | 2174                                 | 0                                  | 2175                               |
|               | Stations/Branches  | 557                                  | 0                                  | 566                                |
|               | Carrier Annexes    | 107                                  | 0                                  | 108                                |
| Eastern       | Post Offices       | 5495                                 | 0                                  | 5496                               |
|               | Stations/Branches  | 785                                  | 0                                  | 783                                |
|               | Carrier Annexes    | 90                                   | 0                                  | 90                                 |
| Great Lakes   | Post Offices       | 3333                                 | 0                                  | 3333                               |
|               | Stations/Branches  | 416                                  | 0                                  | 418                                |
|               | Carrier Annexes    | 81                                   | 0                                  | 83                                 |
| Northeast     | Post Offices       | 3060                                 | 0                                  | 3061                               |
|               | Stations/Branches  | 918                                  | 0                                  | 915                                |
|               | Carrier Annexes    | 99                                   | 0                                  | 100                                |
| Pacific       | Post Offices       | 1090                                 | 0                                  | 1091                               |
|               | Stations/Branches  | 678                                  | 0                                  | 683                                |
|               | Carrier Annexes    | 76                                   | 0                                  | 76                                 |
| Southern      | Post Offices       | 4724                                 | 0                                  | 4725                               |
|               | Stations/Branches  | 921                                  | 0                                  | 922                                |
|               | Carrier Annexes    | 105                                  | 0                                  | 109                                |
| Western       | Post Offices       | 6772                                 | 0                                  | 6774                               |
|               | Stations/Branches  | 674                                  | 0                                  | 661                                |
|               | Carrier Annexes    | 131                                  | 0                                  | 132                                |
| NATIONAL      | Post Offices       | 26648                                | 0                                  | 26655                              |
|               | Stations/Branches  | 4949                                 | 0                                  | 4948                               |
|               | Carrier Annexes    | 689                                  | 0                                  | 698                                |

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<sup>8</sup> Docket ACR2014, Annual Compliance Determination Report, Library Reference USPS-FY14-33.



| <b>Post Offices - FY 2015</b> |                    |                                      |                                    |                                    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Area</b>                   | <b>Office Type</b> | <b>Total at Start of Fiscal Year</b> | <b>Closings During Fiscal Year</b> | <b>Total at End of Fiscal Year</b> |
| Capital Metro                 | Post Offices       | 2149                                 | 0                                  | 2149                               |
|                               | Stations/Branches  | 292                                  | 0                                  | 292                                |
|                               | Carrier Annexes    | 93                                   | 0                                  | 89                                 |
| Eastern                       | Post Offices       | 5339                                 | 0                                  | 5339                               |
|                               | Stations/Branches  | 463                                  | 0                                  | 453                                |
|                               | Carrier Annexes    | 65                                   | 0                                  | 64                                 |
| Great Lakes                   | Post Offices       | 3296                                 | 0                                  | 3296                               |
|                               | Stations/Branches  | 231                                  | 0                                  | 231                                |
|                               | Carrier Annexes    | 60                                   | 0                                  | 60                                 |
| Northeast                     | Post Offices       | 3023                                 | 0                                  | 3023                               |
|                               | Stations/Branches  | 444                                  | 0                                  | 444                                |
|                               | Carrier Annexes    | 75                                   | 0                                  | 74                                 |
| Pacific                       | Post Offices       | 1088                                 | 0                                  | 1088                               |
|                               | Stations/Branches  | 333                                  | 0                                  | 333                                |
|                               | Carrier Annexes    | 57                                   | 0                                  | 57                                 |
| Southern                      | Post Offices       | 4641                                 | 0                                  | 4641                               |
|                               | Stations/Branches  | 930                                  | 0                                  | 589                                |
|                               | Carrier Annexes    | 84                                   | 0                                  | 82                                 |
| Western                       | Post Offices       | 6660                                 | 0                                  | 6660                               |
|                               | Stations/Branches  | 447                                  | 0                                  | 447                                |
|                               | Carrier Annexes    | 103                                  | 0                                  | 101                                |
| NATIONAL                      | Post Offices       | 26196                                | 0                                  | 26196                              |
|                               | Stations/Branches  | 2789                                 | 0                                  | 2789                               |
|                               | Carrier Annexes    | 537                                  | 0                                  | 527                                |

One would expect that the numbers for the end of FY 2014 would be the same as the numbers for the beginning of FY 2015, but there are many discrepancies. For example, the first table shows that the total number of Post Offices at the end of FY 2014 was 26,655, while the second table shows that at the beginning of FY 2015 there were 26,196. Please explain these apparent discrepancies.

9. With respect to the spreadsheet showing the number of delivery points for each mode of delivery provided in Library Reference USPS-FY15-33, please provide definitions for the headers in the sheet entitled "Beginning FY 2015," row 1: ACTIVE RES CURB, ACTIVE RES SDWK, ACTIVE RES NDCBU, ACTIVE RES CENTRAL, ACTIVE RES OTH1, ACTIVE BUS CURB, ACTIVE BUS SDWK, ACTIVE BUS NDCBU, ACTIVE BUS CENTRAL, ACTIVE BUS OTH1, Active Res, Active Bus. With respect to the subsequent sheets, please define their titles: CURB; SDWK; CENT; NDCBU: OTHER. Also, in the note on the first sheet, there is an explanatory comment that reads, "In addition, there is a new tab titled "Sdwk," which reports the number of potential residential and business sidewalk delivery points." Please explain what "potential" means in this context.

Respectfully submitted,

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