

TRANSCRIPT – YOUR POSTAL PODCAST – DECEMBER 2015

Diedre Tillery: Welcome to this special holiday edition of *Your Postal Podcast*. I'm Diedre Tillery, and in this edition, you'll hear about how U.S. Postal Service employees have been helping their customers handle the task of shipping holiday gifts and greetings with ease.

You'll also meet an Ohio Postmaster who has a very special connection to some of this year's most popular holiday postage stamps.

During the holiday season the USPS will deliver approximately 15.5 billion cards, letters and packages. In fact, the package business is booming with an expected 10-and-a-half percent increase in volume over last year. So, how is the Postal Service helping customers be successful with holiday shipping? I sat down with USPS Consumer Advocate John Budzynski to find out.

Tillery: Hi, John – welcome to the podcast. How is the Postal Service working to help customers with shipping options this year?

John Budzynski: The Postal Service offers a wide variety of services all year long. One service to take advantage of this holiday season is to order your free holiday Priority Mail Flat Rate boxes and other supplies, and have them delivered to your home or office for no extra charge. With Priority Mail Flat Rate, you pay one rate, no matter what the rate is, or where the package is going. And Priority Mail Flat Rate packages are delivered within one, two, or three business days based on where your package starts and where it's being sent.

Tillery: That sounds great, but do you have to go to the Post Office to get this?

Budzynski: No, in fact customers can do all their holiday shipping from the comfort of their own home by going to **usps.com** to print shipping labels, postage, and even schedule a next day package pickup at no extra charge. We deliver on Saturdays for free, as well. Combined with our competitive pricing, this makes Priority Mail Flat Rate an especially good choice for consumers and small businesses.

Tillery: Now, are there any discounts for shipping online this holiday season?

Budzynski: Yes, there are. When customers pay and print postage and shipping labels online with Click-N-Ship, they will receive a discount on selected products.

Tillery: Now what if customers have questions about pricing and shipping options?

Budzynski: We offer a one-of-a-kind postage calculator tool on *usps.com*. Customers can check prices and find the best shipping options that work for their shipping needs and budget. They can also purchase insurance online as well. The Postal Service can cover your valuables against loss or damage for up to \$5,000.

Tillery: And what other tips would you like to offer customers to reduce stress during the holiday mailing season?

Budzynski: Well, new this year, we're encouraging all of our customers to sign up at *MyUSPS.com* to get real-time notifications on their smart phones. Customers will receive notices within a few minutes of the delivery scans for select packages. In fact, *MyUSPS.com* is

a single dashboard solution that helps take the stress out of shipping by allowing you to schedule your deliveries while you're away from home; view packages before they arrive, set up alerts and text notifications to track the delivery statuses, and print labels. And if customers need more help in preparing packages, we now have "how to" videos on our YouTube Channel. And finally, don't leave your mail or parcels unattended. If you're going away for a few days, take advantage of the Postal Service's Request Hold Mail Service. You'll have the peace of mind knowing your letters and packages will be held securely at your local Post Office until you're back in town to receive them again.

Tillery: Thanks, John. Monday, December 21st is expected to be the busiest delivery day of the year. The Postal Service expects to deliver more than **30 million packages** on this day alone! So let's get to it. For more information about holiday mailing deadlines, and complete details on shipping products and services, please visit [USPS.com/Holiday](https://www.usps.com/Holiday) or [OurSeason.com](https://www.usps.com/OurSeason).

When it comes to the holiday season, there's a television tradition which has endured for 50 years that's now being celebrated with a set of Forever Stamps. Peter Hass is here to introduce us to a Postmaster with a unique connection to these holiday stamps featuring the Peanuts gang.

Peter Hass: Sycamore, Ohio, Postmaster Earl Musick, a 28-year Postal veteran, has a special fondness for the "Charlie Brown Christmas" Forever Stamps available this holiday season. He is an accomplished cartoonist whose work has appeared in books, magazines and newspapers – and he was also a friend of Peanuts creator Charles Schulz.

Musick said he remembers seeing the Charlie Brown Christmas special as a child and he credits his affection for the Peanuts characters as a young boy with his lifelong desire to draw cartoons himself.

Earl Musick: I remember watching the Charlie Brown special – all the specials – with my family. At that time, we didn't have video recording. Everyone was watching it our age. Nobody called, nobody came over. And then there's this kid, he brought the Charlie Brown Christmas book to my kindergarten class. And the teacher took it, showed it to us all, and read it to us. I thought, ah, it would be so cool to be a cartoonist like that. Since then, I've been with Mrs. Schulz; I've went on trips and things with Schulz – dreams can come true. It's weird how God works things out.

Hass: Musick said Schulz would have approved of the new stamps.

Musick: I was real excited when I found out the stamps were coming out because Charles Schulz and I had talked – one-on-one conversations about his characters being on postage stamps when he was still alive. We talked about that, and he never got to see it. But we did a Snoopy stamp years ago. Now with this Christmas stamp, it's just awesome, because I knew how much he wanted it. For it to come real, it's incredible. I wish he could've seen it. But, the family's excited about it. I talked to Mrs. Schulz – she likes the designs.

Hass: Musick's personal connection with Schulz resulted in his helping introduce the new stamps.

Musick: I had the honor of unveiling the stamps at a cartoon event in Columbus, Ohio – Columbus Cartoons Crossroads. That was an honor – that was very cool. Unfortunately, the next morning, my dad passed away. But I was doing that knowing he was real sick. My memory kept going back to dad popping popcorn and us watching Charlie Brown every year, you know.

'Cause even my dad passing away brings back good memories of Charlie Brown, my dad, and what the Peanuts meant to me.

Hass: In addition to cartooning in his spare time, Musick also tours occasionally as a stand-up comedian and has his own website at earlmusick.com. A Charlie Brown Christmas stamps are available at Post Offices nationwide and at usps.com.

Tillery: Thank you for listening to this edition of *Your Postal Podcast* – and a reminder: We love hearing from you. Please email your comments or story suggestions to us at: YourPostalPodcast@usps.com. And please visit our archives to listen to previous editions at YourPostalPodcast.com.

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Happy Holidays!

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