

BUSINESS MAILERS REVIEW

Monitoring the Postal Service, Private Carriers and Suppliers

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Trump's USPS Plans

President Donald Trump has entered into the postal reform debate with a Fiscal Year 2018 budget proposal that would reduce USPS costs by \$47 billion over ten years by cutting retirement benefits and mail delivery costs.

Benefits Reforms

The budget proposals are part of a plan written in the president's May 23 budget proposal and are part of retirement benefit changes that would affect the federal workforce. The president's ideas appear on page 1207 of an annex to Trump's proposed 2018 federal budget. The retirement changes would save the Postal Service \$33 billion over the years. An additional \$1 billion in savings would come from increasing postal workers' contributions to their health and life insurance.

Service Standards

The president's USPS budget plan adopts some provisions of a bipartisan postal reform bill that passed the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee in February, but it includes reductions in delivery standards that will further mitigate operational costs and service standard pressures.

The president's plan would let the USPS "reduce mail delivery frequency if there is a business case for doing so," which could include the elimination of Saturday delivery. Elimination of Saturday delivery has been resisted by legislators in the past due to the effects on some types of business mailers, including newspapers, coupon advertisers, and on some mail recipients, including those receiving medications by mail.

Cluster Mailboxes

The Trump plan would allow the USPS to move toward centralized "cluster box" delivery and away from door-to-door delivery—a service change that many argue affects negatively seniors, disabled, and others with limited ability to reach centralized mailboxes for mail pick-up.

Early Reactions

While the bill that passed in the House's committee back in February received broad support from the postal unions, the mailing industry, lawmakers and USPS management, it remains to be seen whether the president's proposal will find favor with

the diverse set of proponents of the congressional bill.

Labor leaders may be the first to withdraw support. Indeed, Fredric Rolando, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), said in a May 24 statement that the president's plan would "threaten the long-term viability of the Postal Service." Most postal workers are protected by union agreements that address in detail benefits. These agreements would have to be renegotiated if Congress reduces the benefits postal retirees receive.

Some labor agreements are of such recent vintage that new reforms may be deferred for some time. On May 12, the NALC announced it had reached a tentative forty-month agreement with the USPS covering 213,000 postal workers. That agreement, if approved by members of the union, will run until Sept. 20, 2019. It calls for small wage increases for letter carriers over time and cost of living increases.

Fredric Rolando, president of the NALC, called the president's budget "a missed opportunity on postal reform." "The budget recycles outdated and counterproductive proposals to slash service, attack postal employees and raise [postage] rates on business mailers that will be met with universal opposition," Rolando said.

"Now is not the time to curtail delivery days or reduce door delivery," he added, saying his union remains hopeful "that we can work with the White House on sensible reform that's good for business, labor and the American public."

Service reductions and lowered delivery standards may mean fewer jobs. Changes in retirement and benefit programs may affect livelihoods. "It is unfortunate and disappointing that the administration would so recklessly attack the livelihoods of active and retired federal retirees who have devoted their lives to our country," Rolando said. "NALC will vigorously fight any budget proposal that attacks our members or the Postal Service."

House committee leadership has not weighed in on the differences between the February bill and the president's proposal. Rep. Jason Chaffetz, (R-Utah) one of the postal reform bill's drafters and the chairman of the oversight committee, said he raised the issue of postal reform with the president during a February visit to the White House. The House's bill might have suffered a setback when Chaffetz, announced he was leaving

(Continued on Page 3)

Short Takes

The USPS put its stamp of approval on video technology by selecting technology from Pitney Bowes to support its journey to “create a more connected, effective, and modern mailing experience.”

The interactive USPS experience, will help educate and inform Mail Owners and Mail Service Providers (MSPs) on how to take part in and deliver value from the 2017 Mailing Promotions and USPS Informed Delivery campaigns.

The agency relies on the fact that nothing replaces the tactile value of hardcopy mail, but USPS recognizes consumers’ increasing desire to interact and communicate digitally with everything, including their mail. Informed Delivery campaigns and the 2017 Mailing Promotions enhance the value of physical mail by seamlessly integrating it into a rich, digital experience, thus maintaining the relevancy of mail and growing mail volume.

“Direct mail remains one of the most effective marketing tools available today,” said Bob Guidotti, Executive Vice President & President of Software Solutions at Pitney Bowes. “But as our physical and digital worlds merge, organizations must leverage both to succeed. USPS is leading the way by offering its customers meaningful physical and digital experience, and we’re proud that EngageOne Video will play a role in these customer experiences.”

EngageOne Video is a customer engagement solution that delivers interactive communications designed specifically for each viewer. <https://mobilemarketingwatch.com/usps-puts-stamp-approval-video-technology-71895/>.

The Postal Service was honored as the nation’s best among the top twenty-five government agencies for promoting diversity and inclusiveness in business opportunities in America. Over two million businesses voted, and USPS ranked number one for engaging in supplier diversity by providing opportunities to diverse enterprise owners. USPS accepted the top award for the sixth year in a row; for the sixteenth consecutive year the agency has ranked among top agencies for this honor.

The award is bestowed by Omnikal, the largest, inclusive business organization in the country. Omnikal’s membership includes thousands of businesses and entrepreneurs in the United States, which

strive to embrace inclusion to lead to corporate success. The recipients of this year’s award were determined by Omnikal’s members’ responses to questions about the quality of business initiatives implemented to include companies led by women and minorities.

“We are honored that the Postal Service has again been selected as the country’s top government agency for multicultural business opportunities,” said Supply Management Vice President, Susan M. Brownell. As an agency committed to diversity, the Postal Service focuses on partnering with diverse, innovative business partners, which ultimately contributes to the organization’s operational success.

Brownell explains, “As an essential part of our procurement strategy, supplier diversity continues to strengthen the Postal Service’s competitiveness in the marketplace. We remain committed to maintain a strong, competitive, and diverse supplier base.”

As part of its efforts to retain diverse suppliers, USPS is dedicated to the promotion of supplier registration, hosting workshops, facilitating one-on-one business meetings, and posting materials online to guide business owners with the marketing of their supplies and services. This pledge to diversity and inclusion by USPS has not gone unnoticed by Omnikal, which has led the agency to be acknowledged by its peers for this esteemed honor for over a decade.

Supplier inclusion is imperative for the continued growth and brand success of the United States Postal Service. Within this growing economic sector, the Postal Service strives to empower and collaborate with diverse partners to maintain positive rapport within the business community and remain on the cutting edge of business in the 21st century.

USPS workers delivered the mail May 13th while picking up donated groceries. It was part of the annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive.

Stamp Out Hunger is a joint campaign between Hunger Task Force and the U.S. Postal Service. Local mail carriers collect donated items of food on their mail route and then later drop it off at the Hunger Task Force.

In most communities, people made their donation: either by putting them in a bag and hanging them from their mailbox, or delivering them to the curb at a local post office. They hand them off to their mail carrier and were on their way. <http://fox6now.com/2017/05/13/a-way-way-to-give-back-usps-collects-food-from-community-to-stamp-out-hunger/>.

Community support was gratifying. In Colorado alone, USPS took in a million pounds of food..

Trump's USPS Plans... (*cont. from page 1*)

Congress June 30. The president's proposal could put reform plans back on track.

Some aspects of the president's proposal may assist the agency in its efforts to expand revenues through revision of a limited business plan. Greater price flexibility for postal products, means that Postmaster General Megan Brennan could expand services to help the Postal Service improve revenues. The president said legislators should allow "increasing collaboration with state and local governments," a step that might allow post offices to offer some state and local government services at postal counters.

The president also urged "enhancing Postal Service governance to ensure sound financial management," and "requiring the future rate structure for the Postal Service to provide enough flexibility to ensure both the stability of postal operations and the ability of the postal service to meet its statutory obligations for retiree health and pension costs."

USPS recently posted a second quarter of 2017 \$562 million loss. Reforms that enhance USPS flexibility to respond to market forces may be popular at the USPS. Meanwhile, the Postal Regulatory Commission is reviewing the rate-setting system that determines the price of a first-class postage stamp.

Additionally, ending Saturday deliveries was a

Calling USPS to Task for Service Issues

Senator Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.) and Senator Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.) recently sent a letter to the U.S. comptroller general, asking for an audit into the protocols of the Postal Service and whether or not its performance data is accurate.

The letter says they are aware of "potentially concerning practices on the part of USPS employees," and are therefore concerned that reported performance data doesn't "reflect postal customers' actual mail experience," based on continued complaints from constituents. McCaskill reports hearing from constituents about known issues with USPS, such as mail being scanned 'as delivered' days before actually being delivered, and said USPS provided data has not matched reports from customers. Many customers are reporting unreasonable delays, with mail taking as much as a week

USPS proposal that proved so unpopular with members of Congress that Postmaster General Megan Brennan dropped the idea. Annual federal appropriations bills that pay the USPS for free and reduced rate mailing have repeatedly contained language that requires the agency to maintain a six-day delivery schedule. Former President Barack Obama also included the stipulation to keep the current delivery schedule intact in his budget proposals. It is unclear how Congress would react to another proposal containing a cutback to five days of home mail delivery. This term is not in the House bill and the Senate has no bill in the works.

"The U.S. Postal Service appreciates that the president's proposed 2018 budget recognizes the need to enact postal legislative and regulatory reform," Postal Service spokesman David Partenheimer said in a statement. "Both are essential to enabling the Postal Service to meet its obligations in a financially sustainable manner. The Postal Service looks forward to continuing to work with the administration and with Congress to enact postal reform legislation."

Some members of the president's party condemned the president's budget proposals, saying the overall budget plan was "dead on arrival" on Capitol Hill. The USPS welcomed the president's ideas.

Informed Delivery Goes Live

"Informed delivery" is now available—at no cost to postal customers. Customers now have a tool for tracking their mail the day it hits the mailbox. The USPS takes a digital picture of each piece of mail and sends

longer than its supposed to take, Senator McCaskill said. She said she wants to "know the facts," and that passing postal reform is also something to tackle.

"We need to pass postal reform in Congress that will relieve some of the monetary burdens they have right now," she said to local 41 Action News.

The USPS claims it wants to hear the complaints that prompted the letter. "We always want to hear directly from our customers immediately when they have a delivery concern, and urge them to call the U.S. Postal Service's Customer Care line at 1 800-ASK-USPS or contact their local Post Office as soon as possible so that the issue can be looked into and addressed promptly." <http://www.kshb.com/news/state/missouri/mo-senator-wants-accountability-for-poor-postal-service>.

Informed Delivery Goes Live

the pictures to the customer's email. The Postal Service processes millions of pieces of mail each day, its machines already take images as letters are scanned through. Those images of letters and cards

now are being used in the USPS's new Informed Delivery program.

Customers who sign up for Informed Delivery receive a morning email that contains images of letters they can expect that day or the next. Notifications are only sent to email on days when mail is being processed and delivered to the home. The images show the exterior of the mail, not anything inside.

Potential users favor the program for several reasons:

- it gives customers a tool for identifying when they are victims of mail theft

- it lets them know when an important missive is available for pick-up

- it allows mailers who use testing subjects to confirm when sales pieces hit customers' mailboxes.

With an estimated two million using the program and 10,000 per day signing up, the program seems likely to succeed. <https://americanprinter.com/columnists/sid-chadwick/060217-usps-daily-digest-sid-chadwick-ampr>.

For more information, visit the informeddelivery.usps.com website.

Mailboxes Leaving a Corner Near You

The Postal Service removed nearly forty blue mailboxes last month from San Francisco per *Hoodline.com*. A thirty-day notice was placed on all the mailboxes slated for removal. Augustine Ruiz of USPS' Corporate Communications department, told the publication that receptacles were removed for underuse.

"Postal service rules dictate that each box must receive at least 25 pieces of mail each day, but 'the boxes listed fell well short of that threshold,' said Ruiz via email, adding that 'none of them had more than 25 pieces in them on any given day.'"

The USPS seeks to "concentrate higher volumes of mail at boxes in higher-traffic areas, especially in front of existing post offices. To determine where customers are depositing mail, postal workers perform ongoing density checks, said Ruiz." "This allows us to streamline our collection runs where we can collect the largest volume in strategically placed boxes in a more economical manner," said Ruiz. <http://hoodline.com/2017/05/us-postal-service-removed-nearly-40-mailboxes-last-month>.

Driverless Cars Mean Delivery Options

Autonomous vehicle company Nvidia expects autonomous vehicles to affect transportation the way Amazon is changing the way products and services are delivered to customers. Nvidia CEO Jen-Hsun Huang says the "Amazon effect" will "turn transportation on its head," reports *CIO*.

The new driverless cars will move people and products from place to place. Cars are not the only unmanned vehicles that may one day bring products to consumers' doors. Amazon plans to pursue Prime Air, a program in which unmanned aerial vehicles will deliver products in under thirty minutes. Nvidia would like to see autonomous cabs get into action, and could provide hardware and mapping technology for accurate point-to-point navigation.

One of the key indicia that plans will be realized is that self-driving cars from famous car brands are driving early excitement around autonomous vehicles, Huang said on an earnings call. He expects autonomous technology to effect change in areas like logistics and warehousing, which could also bring operational efficiency.

Early Testing

In 2015, Daimler rolled out a self-driving eighteen-wheeler truck on the streets. The truck first was tested

in Germany and at the time approved for use in Nevada.

In the same year, the autonomous truck delivered 51,744 beer cans from Denver to a facility in Colorado Springs.

Autonomous tractors are make farming efficient. Think of a Roomba in the fields, capable of navigating crops in the systematic pattern in which they were planted.

Passenger vehicles are already on the road with assisted self-driving cars parking cars and halting to avoid items outside of the driver's sight.

Fully autonomous cars have been developed by companies. Like Google, Nvidia, and Intel. Apple expects to have a car before long.

Navigational Software

Nvidia and Intel have computers for cars. Nvidia's GPUs drive AI systems and data collection by sensors in cars. Intel hopes to acquire Israeli company Mobileye to get a full set of technology for self-driving cars. 5G communications networks—which could be live by 2020—could bring new approaches for allowing cars to communicate on bad road conditions ahead or ambulances to pursue the fastest route to patients or hospitals.

Upping the Ante in *Waymo v. Uber*

The judge managing the claim that Uber stole intellectual property of Waymo has asked the U.S. attorney to examine whether Uber may have taken criminally technology to build self-driving cars when it took on a Waymo technology team member.

The order by Judge William Alsup was one of two issued. Judge Alsup also ruled that Google's self-driving car spinoff, Waymo, could proceed with its claims against Uber. Uber sought to avoid trial and move the case into private arbitration.

Waymo claims Uber stole trade secrets and intellectual property it had developed related to lidar, the radar-like sensors that self-driving cars use to navigate.

The case has taken court observers on a ride through surprising developments, including allegations of evidence being hidden from the court, claims defendants used a shell company to conceal a transfer of secrets, and the hiring of a high-profile Waymo engineer by Uber. That engineer has refused to testify and has invoked his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination.

Google invested in Uber, back when it was a start-up and later invested in Waymo's technology development.

Uber has not commented on the referral to the U.S. attorney's office, but it objected to the order denying its bid for arbitration. "It is unfortunate that Waymo will be permitted to avoid abiding by the arbitration promise it requires its employees to make," an Uber representative told *Business Insider*. "We remain confident in our case and welcome the chance to talk about our independently developed technology in any forum." <http://www.businessinsider.com/ubersmotiontocompelarbitrationisbeingsentinto20175>.

By Judge Alsup's order, the U.S. attorney should examine whether Uber broke the law in addition to committing a civil wrong against its competitor. The case is referred to the U.S. attorney for "investigation of possible theft of trade secrets based on the evidentiary record supplied thus far concerning plaintiff Waymo LLC's claims for trade secret misappropriation," Alsup wrote in a separate order. "The court takes no position on whether is or is not warranted, a decision entirely up to the United States Attorney."

Observers await yet another ruling in the case shortly. Waymo has requested a preliminary injunction to stop part of Uber's self-driving car research.

Waymo's case against Uber relies in substantial

part on the actions taken by engineer Anthony Levandowski, a former Google engineer accused of downloading 14,000 files from Google before leaving the company. Thereafter, Google spun off Waymo. Waymo's suit deliberately names Uber, and does not focus on Levandowski. *Business Insider* says Waymo, "purposefully brought the case against Uber and not Levandowski to keep it in the public spotlight and avoid its obligation" to resolve disputes relating to Levandowski's employment agreement pursuant to a mandatory private arbitration provision Google drafted.

Suing Levandowski would have taken the case to arbitration. Suing Uber and Otto, the "shell company" Levandowski formed just prior to joining Uber's team, sidestepped this arena.

"Defendants have repeatedly accused Waymo of using 'artful' or 'tactical' pleading to evade its arbitration obligations by omitting Levandowski as a defendant. These accusations are unwarranted," Alsup wrote in his opinion.

Judge Alsup says Waymo behaved appropriately under the circumstances. "Waymo has honored its obligation to arbitrate against Levandowski by arbitrating its claims (concerning employee poaching) against Levandowski," Alsup continued. "Its decision to bring separate claims against defendants in court was not only reasonable but also the only course available, since Waymo had no arbitration agreement with defendants."

"This was a desperate bid by Uber to avoid the court's jurisdiction," a Waymo representative said. "We welcome the court's decision today, and we look forward to holding Uber responsible in court for its misconduct."

Judge Alsup also addressed Levandowski's motion to deny arbitration, saying Levandowski, an engineer for Uber's self-driving car division "continues to obstruct" after invoking his Fifth Amendment right to avoid self-incrimination "Even though he is not a defendant here, moreover, Levandowski's assertion of his Fifth Amendment privilege has obstructed and continues to obstruct both discovery and defendants' ability to construct a complete narrative as to the fate of Waymo's purloined files," Judge Alsup wrote. Read more at <http://www.businessinsider.com/ubersmotiontocompelarbitrationisbeingsentinto20175>.

USPS Bridges the Divide in a Digital World

Debate over the future utility of mail in an increasingly digital world recently benefited from the input of Bob Dixon, Director, Product Technology Innovation at the United States Postal Service. Speaking to *eMarketer's* Jillian Ryan, Dixon states that “[t]echnology and digital are not a threat.” Instead, the USPS will bridge “the divide between physical mail and digital touchpoints.”

Dixon heads a team that finds or develops and delivers its own best prospects for resolving challenges to continuing vitality of the agency. As he explained it, “We are responsible for working with both internal stakeholders and external customers and figuring out which digital business needs they have that are not being met. We aim to get a technology solution that can be used to meet those needs. When there is not a technology solution already in-house, my team will go out and research—we’ll prototype new solutions in conjunction with our stakeholders and then evaluate whether or not that solution is viable. When it is viable, we turn it over to our IT organization for implementation. Where it’s not viable, we write the lessons learned to inform future innovations.”

Innovation without relevance is not a path to success. Dixon defends the mail system with a single statement as to its relevance: “Mail is still the marketing channel with the highest response rate.” As he explains it, “Without consumers receiving the mail, there is a \$900 billion industry that ceases to exist. Some might say that postal has perceived

digital as a threat to its core business. But our marketing team has acknowledged and embraced that digital does not have to be a competitor, but [instead] could be a complementary feature of our products.”

As the USPS rolls out Informed Delivery in additional areas (*see BMR 06/05/2017, p. 3*), one example of how the USPS retains relevance is its offering of pictures of mail to arrive that day: “We have an emerging consumer who may not always be going to a mailbox. We need to figure out how do we make the mailbox more accessible in a medium that those consumers are already comfortable with. We have designed services to complement the physical mail with a digital message, and then be able to provide a digital response channel.

“It really is about maintaining the relevance by opening up other channels. We need to build a bridge between physical and digital. And that is not just a one-way transformation. It’s not just bringing a digital component to the physical mail—it’s also bringing a physical component to digital.

“We need to figure out how do we make the mailbox more accessible in a medium that those consumers are already comfortable with.”

Read more at <https://www.emarketer.com/Article/Why-Digital-Not-Threat-USPS/1015905>.

NPF 2017 Features Innovations

On May 23rd, the Postal Service held the National Postal Forum (NPF) in Baltimore, Md. This event served as a key opportunity to showcase some of the nation’s most innovative mail, as well as the agencies who create these pieces.

The National Postal Forum is an annual national gathering of the mailing industry’s most influential thought leaders, innovators and visionaries. The 2017 Forum took place May 21-24 in Baltimore and featured four days of postal and industry leadership addresses, instructional workshops, and networking events designed to help the mailing industry and associated businesses achieve greater successes.

Promotes Technology

“A new feature that lets customers see emailed images of their incoming physical mail has attracted more than two million users, U.S. Postal Service Postmaster General and CEO Megan J. Brennan announced during the opening session of the NPF, the country’s premier mailing and shipping conference. Brennan

added that with the offering available in nearly every ZIP Code in the United States, more than 10,000 new people are signing up every day.

“As promised at last year’s Forum, Informed Delivery is now available in virtually every community in America,” said Brennan. “Informed Delivery makes mail even more dynamic, adding a whole new layer to the evolution of the mail experience.”

Informed Delivery is a free feature that provides emailed images of incoming mail to registered residential customers. Brennan said that Informed Delivery brings mail into the daily digital and mobile lives of consumers, builds anticipation of the physical mailpiece, and provides mail senders with a new mobile platform from which to attach digital messages. It rolled out nationwide in April, but had been available in different pilot areas prior to then.

Delivering the Forum keynote address, Brennan also discussed Postal Service strategies and innovations designed to enhance customer experience and

add value to mail, and better position the mailing and shipping industry to compete for customers in an increasingly dynamic economy.

"Together, as an industry, we are investing in new capabilities to strengthen the value of mail in the digital world," Brennan said. "Most importantly, we're collaborating to deliver better experiences for our customers."

Addressing a crowd of more than 3000, Brennan outlined key Postal Service investments and initiatives that are benefitting the mailing and shipping industry—emphasizing the important role that data and digital integration are playing. "The growth of the mailing and shipping industry relies on our unrivaled network and rich data platform," she said. "We are at the convergence of physical and digital, there has never been a bigger opportunity for mail."

Brennan also showcased the power of Informed Visibility—the Postal Service's advanced data platform and analytics capability—to enable coordinated marketing campaigns. By providing real-time delivery data to senders, Informed Visibility allows businesses to weave together and tailor powerful integrated marketing programs based on the moment mail reaches the mailbox.

"We are provisioning Informed Visibility data to the industry and developing new technology solutions to support coordinated marketing campaigns," Brennan said. "With these technologies, marketers can ensure they are delivering the right message at the right time."

The Postmaster General committed to a strategy of reinventing and investing in technology, infrastructure and innovation. She also encouraged the mailing and shipping industry to speed the pace of best practice and new technology adoption.

Tech in Focus

Technical.ly Baltimore described the conference's focus on technology as an overriding theme: "[T]here were mailtech (we're going for it . . .) companies like Alexandria-based Click2Mail introducing a tool that allows the sending of physical docs right from Microsoft Word. There was New Jersey-based GrayHair Software rolling out new data visualization tools (they even had puppies)."

Pitney Bowes, self-identifying as a tech company, pushed "to integrate digital tools with the physical products that are being sent. The company now has a large software team, and has partnerships with a host of tech companies."

As the author explained it: "One area where that's playing out is in cloud. Pitney Bowes VP for SMB Solutions Jeff Crouse said the company has been

rolling out new ways to give small and medium-sized businesses the tools that bigger companies have. One connects the postage meter to the cloud.

"The company is increasingly focusing on data that's being gathered during the shipping process. 'The data on the backend is really valuable for the client experience,' Crouse said." <https://technical.ly/baltimore/2017/05/25/national-postal-forum-tech/>.

Partnership for Growth

The Postal Service recognized United Health Group (UHG) with the Partnership for Growth award on the final day of the NPF. The Partnership for Growth award is given annually at NPF to recognize a strong mailing industry contributor that drives innovation and growth using USPS.

UHG was selected to receive this year's Partnership for Growth Award by Postmaster General and CEO Megan J. Brennan with concurrence of the USPS Executive Leadership Team. UHG is being recognized for continuously working with the Postal Service to ensure it reaches its customers using new and innovative technologies that increase the value of the mail.

"Congratulations to United Health Group on winning this award," said Postmaster General Brennan. "We are pleased to support their innovative approach to both mailing and shipping with a variety of products and services. Our strategic partnership has resulted in better experiences for UHG and Postal Service customers and employees."

Working with the Postal Service, UHG sends more than one billion pieces of mail to its members and providers annually. The company uses the mail to engage members, increasing their knowledge and education. It also uses the mail as a strong component of its employee wellness campaign.

Listening In

Check out *Bloomberg* for audio from some speakers at the NPF. Kristin Seaver, chief information officer and executive vice president of the Postal Service, discusses mail intelligence engineering platforms, staying competitive and new technology. *Bloomberg BNA*'s Jonathan Nicholson talks about Trump's budget proposal and highlights from Mick Mulvaney's briefing. Chris Hewlett, the manager of U.S. drone powered solutions at Pricewaterhouse Coopers, discusses drones and how they will matter to businesses. Finally, Pritha Mehra, the vice president of mail entry and payment technology at USPS, talks about USPS' payment systems and how it is modernizing and enhancing the customer experience. Listen at <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/audio/2017-05-23/usps-seaver-sees-cases-for-autonomous-and-drone-delivery>.

Briefs

At the National Postal Forum, the USPS recognized The Lincoln Motor Company, Hudson Rouge, and Structural Graphics with the Irresistible Mail Grand Champion Award for their ability to create exceptional and innovative mail pieces. The Postal Service also recognized the University of Pittsburgh and Unofficial Cardboard with the first-ever Irresistible Mail Award for Innovative Technology.

Irresistible Mail is a program that highlights mailpieces that increase engagement through innovative design, print or digital technologies. Mail is evolving, allowing marketers to leverage the unique interactivity of mail and create new and powerful experiences by seamlessly connecting mail with digital content and by employing new printing techniques to improve memorability and responses.

The Lincoln Motor Company's piece "See it First," which was designed by Hudson Rouge and printed by Structural Graphics, was one of four finalists recognized. The other recognized finalists were:

"Toyota Sienna Superhero" from Gulf States Toyota
"Holiday Inkling Mystery Game" from The Standard Group

"It Takes Something Amazing" from Porsche

The Lincoln Motor Company's champion mailpiece played a video that introduced the Continental's heritage and features. It was accompanied by a tri-fold brochure and offered a framed print to those placing pre-orders.

The University of Pittsburgh's mailpiece "Pitt Honors Admits Cardboard" included cardboard goggles so that students could take a virtual reality tour of the campus.

The submissions to the Irresistible Mail Award showcased a multitude of engagement elements and their combinations, such as physical interactivity, multisensory experiences with scents and textures, augmented reality, video in print, colorful envelopes, uniquely shaped mail pieces, personalized messages, and keepsakes.

Be beguiled by the convergence of pixels and papers at the event's website: <http://www.irresistiblemail.com/>.

GS Marketing (GSM) was formally invited to attend this event because it was hand-selected as a quarterly winner and received an Irresistible Mail Award. Marissa McGinty attended on GSM's behalf. She accepted the win and spoke on a panel discussion hosted by USPS.

GSM received the Q1 Irresistible Mail Award win for the Toyota "Sienna Superhero" lenticular—a piece that evoked nostalgia with a nod to the family-focus of the Toyota Sienna. Following shortly after this recognition was an honorable mention for the GSM "Imaginary friends" lenticular mailer. In selecting, the USPS was looking for a piece that would help to lead the example that mail is not dead. In fact, mail like GSM's works to combine unique elements that establish a sense of being interactive, utilizing innovative digital components. The USPS wanted to present an open forum that would emphasize these key aspects, as well as the winning creative agencies.

GSM's McGinty spoke on behalf of her team and shared the creative focus behind the winning GSM campaign. "I was inspired by watching everyone who got excited looking at our mail — to see they were impressed with the overall piece."

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Cheryl Kettler, Editor 773-580-4165

Kathy Thorne, Publisher 301-528-7777

Website: www.businessmailersreview.com

Editorial email: support@pnmsi.com

Editorial address: PO Box 335

Boysts, MD 20841-0335

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