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## **USPS' PARCEL RETURN SERVICES SIMPLIFIES CATALOG, ONLINE SHOPPING**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The United States Postal Service has launched a merchandise returns program custom tailored to catalogers and online shippers. Parcel Return Services, launched as a two-year pilot, offers merchants a cost-effective way to retrieve items their customers choose to return. The service provides added convenience to customers through a specially designed, prepaid return label that shippers can place in the original packages; mail to customers; or make available to their customers to download via the Internet.

Merchants, or their parcel consolidators, who have been approved as participants for the Parcel Return Services pilot can choose to pick up returned merchandise at a Post Office delivery unit or Bulk Mail Center that serves the original customer. By so doing, the Postal Service's incurs less cost in processing and transporting parcels back to the mailer's warehouse. Participants benefit from lower rates that result from these savings to the Postal Service. Customers need only place the pre-printed label on the package they wish to return; give it to a letter carrier; drop it in a collection box or bring it to the Post Office.

"The new Parcel Return Services will streamline the mail process for everyone," said USPS Manager, Package Services Jim Cochrane. "This service will help catalogers and retailers manage their returns inventory. It can also be useful in routing returned merchandise to an alternate destination of the merchant's choosing," he added.

Parcel Return Services has new rates available for general merchandise and book returns. The price for parcels picked up at the Post Office nearest the customer is \$2 per parcel. Prices for pieces picked up at the Bulk Mail Center depend on the weight of the piece and the distance traveled. By picking up the parcels at the Bulk Mail Center, merchants can save 24 cents to \$1.51 per parcel off existing rates.

This program will give the Postal Service an opportunity to gauge market demand for Parcel Return Services. During the first year of the program, the Postal Service will have a limit of twenty pre-qualified participants. That number can grow to thirty in the second year. For more information about Parcel Return Services, your local postmaster can direct you to a USPS Account Representative.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that makes deliveries to about 140 million addresses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of more than \$67 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 43 percent of the world's mail volume - some 203 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year - and serves seven million customers each day at its 38,000 retail locations nationwide.

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