

## Your Postal Podcast 53rd Edition Transcript – October 2012

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**Richard Watkins:** Welcome to *Your Postal Podcast*. This is Richard Watkins of U.S. Postal Service Corporate Communications. In this October twenty-twelve edition, you'll hear about an employee whose special effort on his route only months into the job follows a long, proud tradition of letter carriers, and later we'll share a tale of two cities in two states that share in a single identity.

### Heroic Letter Carrier

**Watkins:** For decades, postal letter carriers have been known not just for delivering the mail, but for keeping their eye out for the neighborhoods they serve and saving hundreds of lives by doing so. Peter Hass was able to visit with a Portland, Oregon, carrier whose quick action on his route only months after being hired have already earned him a place in that proud heritage.

**Peter Hass:** Jeff Brosy only joined the Postal Service as a transitional employee in December of last year. But he's already part of a brotherhood and sisterhood of letter carriers whose quick thinking and attentiveness have helped save customers' lives.

On a hot August day, Brosy was walking a section of his route in Portland, Oregon's Sellwood neighborhood when he heard a call for help from across the street.

**Brosy:** Probably about 11 o'clock in the morning, and it was a very warm day; we'd had a stretch of real hot weather – I had started my loop and was just on about the second house. And down from a staircase came a Hispanic woman in a maid uniform. And she was waving – and she was saying, "Help, I need your help." I thought it was a fire at first because things had been so dry. And she said, "No, there's a man, he's dying. He's not breathing -- I need your help." And she had a cell phone in her hand. So, I came her way; we had to climb some stairs to come up. I said, "What's wrong?" and she said, "It's a man, he's not breathing." Very broken English. I said, "Did you call 9-1-1?" She said, "Yes, but they don't understand me, and I can't help him." So, I came over to where this guy was laying flat and I said, "What have you done?" And she said, "We don't know what to do." And I said, "Give me the phone." I talked to the 9-1-1 operator and she said, "Oh, good – what's this guy's position?" So, basically what we had to do was get him flat, elevate his feet and clear his breathing. So, with their assistance, I put down the mail, and got to work.

Portland Postmaster Shawneen Betha says Brosy's heroic actions are typical of the dedication and service to the community all letter carriers are known for.

**Betha:** For our traditional carriers, it's been long-standing that they assist the customers. You know, our carriers deliver mail to the customer's house every single day; they kind of know their habits. You know, there's a medical distress -- for Jeff to be able to say, "Hey, you know, I can help this person," and just jump in to help the housekeepers that were trying to call 9-1-1; I mean, that's commendable. That's what we've come to know the letter carrier to do.

**Hass:** Brosy says he was advised early on by longtime carriers that he would learn there is more to being a letter carrier than just delivering the mail.

**Brosy:** It's funny, because the other carriers told me you'll get to know more about people than you really want to know (chuckles), because I'm not necessarily by nature a nosy person. But you do start learning things about people and being around them. But it is, it's so important to be there when it's necessary, because there are the elderly and people who are infirm and housebound, that just that little touch of the outside world is really important to them. That's really fulfilling to me, because I do have some older folks that I communicate with pretty often. That's one of the – like I say – one of the rewarding things about the job that I've found so far, is that connection that you do find on a regular basis.

### **Texarkana Segment**

**Watkins:** Most towns are fiercely independent, with their own name, their own exit off the freeway, and their own Post Office. But we found two neighboring towns who are exceptionally different. David Rupert tells us all about it.

**David Rupert:** The United States is full of towns that share borders with neighboring states. Some even share the same names, like Kansas City, Kansas-Missouri, or Bristol, Tennessee-Virginia. Each of those towns has a separate Post Office – and a separate, distinct identity.

But one Post Office is entirely unique, physically straddling two states, serving two towns. Texarkana, Arkansas, and Texarkana, Texas, are joined in name, in a single Post Office facility and in identity:

**Jane Smith:** We consider ourselves really one city. We do have two separate governments, but we just say we're from Texarkana.

**Rupert:** That's Jane Smith, a clerk who has worked at this unique building for more than 27 years. To the employees, it's not really a big deal.

**Smith:** You know, since we're here all the time, we don't think about how unusual that it is. But we do have people come in quite often looking for postcards. And there's a photographer's island out front where people can have their picture taken with one foot in Texas and one in Arkansas. I have relatives that come to town and that's what they want to do is go downtown and get their picture made (chuckles). That's funny, because I'm here all the time.

**Rupert:** Does it confuse employees or complicate operations?

**Smith:** It doesn't for us; it does now some for customers, because customers have gotten more savvy at checking their scans to see where their packages are now. And it's confusing to them to when they know they've sent it to a Texarkana, Arkansas, address and it shows Texarkana, Texas, scans on it, and they think it's in the wrong city because we do have different ZIP Codes but we are one facility. So, it is confusing to them and little hard for us to explain.

**Rupert:** If a customer walks in and wants a postmark, what state will it say? Or does it depend on what side of the counter they're standing?

**Smith:** I think we are the only ones that have a bi-state postmark. It actually says "Texarkana, AR-TX."

**Rupert:** The building was erected in 1931 and also serves as a district court and houses other government offices. When it was built, the architect incorporated a unique feature into the art-deco construction: the building sits on Texas granite and is adorned with Arkansas limestone.

**Smith:** The object was to make all the federal buildings beautiful and monumental and substantial.

**Rupert:** Jane has a message from the residents of this town of two states:

**Smith:** Come to Texarkana! We have a lot to offer!

### **News Roundup**

**Watkins:** And now here's a look at recent postal headlines.

In his annual state of the business address to the mailing industry, Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe recently emphasized that the U.S. Postal Service has a solid business plan to return to long-term financial stability – and that nothing will have a bigger impact on the health and future of the mailing industry than resolving legislative issues. Quoting the PMG, "The Postal Service is moving forward with the parts of our business plan that we can control, and securing comprehensive legislation will allow us to implement the rest of the plan," said Donahoe. "Our industry is fundamentally strong and has a bright future."

The Postmaster General also encouraged industry members to speak with one voice to stop misconceptions that many in the business community have about the mailing industry. Quoting the PMG again, "One of the biggest misperceptions is the idea that mail is somehow losing its value. According to our research, two-thirds of consumers polled said that they value what they receive in the mail."

Another misconception is that the Postal Service is going out of business. Donahoe assured the audience that the Postal Service remains a strong, vital engine of the nearly 800-billion-dollar mailing industry.

In other news, the Postal Service is urging you not to toss out that old, outdated cell phone, PDA, digital camera or other small electronic device. The Postal Service has recently expanded to 3,100 retail locations a recycling program where customers can trade in old electronic gadgets for cash. The Postal Service is working with electronics recycling company MaxBack, which specializes in reducing waste that ends up in landfills by either buying back or simply recycling unwanted electronics. Visit [usps.com/ship/recycle-through-usps.htm](https://usps.com/ship/recycle-through-usps.htm) to find out how much your old cell phone is worth and to see if your items qualify for instant cash.

Thanks for listening to *Your Postal Podcast*. Now we'd like to hear from you. One lucky listener who posts a comment about this month's podcast on the *Your Postal Podcast* webpage will be selected at random to receive a free Latin Music Legends Digital Color Postmark Keepsake, featuring a sheet of 20 stamps honoring artists including Selena and Tito Puente, along with five stamped envelopes with color postmarks. The winner will be selected from all qualifying comments posted by November 2nd, 2012.

Our congratulations go out to Leanne Wendte from Crofton, Nebraska, who posted a comment about September's podcast and has won a Bonsai Notecard Set.

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