

## Your Postal Podcast Version 25 Transcript

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**Richard Watkins:** Welcome to Your Postal Podcast. This is Richard Watkins with the Postal Service's office of Corporate Communications. In this edition, we'll talk to the Biggest Loser, who works for the Postal Service. And we'll hear some Big Ideas about our future from Postal Service employees around the country.

But first, we hit the ground running with a story about the potential for big changes in the future of mail delivery. The Postal Service has been testing electric vehicles since before the turn of the 20th century, but are they the answer to powering the next generation of postal vehicles? Brian Sperry is here with the story.

### (Electric Vehicles Segment)

**Brian Sperry:** High oil prices and environmentally conscious consumers and companies are driving change in the motor vehicle industry. Rivals to the gas engine are many. Just which technology will win out is anyone's guess. Buy too soon and you could be stuck with the equivalent of HD-DVD instead of Blu-ray.

The Postal Service is in the market to replace a large percentage of its aging fleet of 217,000 vehicles -- the largest civilian vehicle fleet in the world. But which of the technologies do you choose? Electric, hydrogen, compressed natural gas, or a hybrid?

USPS Vice President of Engineering, David Williams and his staff are hard at work researching and testing electric vehicles and other technologies.

**David Williams:** We're testing 30, two-ton vehicles in New York. We've been conducting the test since about 2001. We're evaluating the total cost of ownership. So far it's gone very well. The carriers seem to really like the vehicles. We are concerned about battery life as well as some of the maintenance costs.

**Sperry:** New York City Carrier Glenn Alston has been driving a two-ton electric vehicle for eight years now to deliver Express Mail, Parcel Post, load relay boxes, and pick up packages.

**Glenn Alston:** I enjoy driving them just because of the emissions factor. That component is great. When we're coming to a stop, and we get out of the vehicle, the person around the vicinity of the vehicle, they can't believe that that truck actually came to a stop because they never heard and they never smelled it. And they seem to really, really enjoy that aspect of it. So you feel a little special that you're driving a different type of vehicle than everyone else in the city.

**Sperry:** Five LLVs are currently being converted from gas to electric, with testing set to begin this summer in the Washington DC area.

**Williams:** It will last a year and we'll be collecting a lot of data around usage, cost per mile, maintenance cost. We think that we've got to do our due diligence in evaluating this technology. Because, any future decisions around future technology is going to have to last us a long time.

**Sperry:** So what will the postal vehicle of the future look like? According to Williams, there's a lot to like about the design of the LLV.

**Williams:** The folks that designed the LLV did a great job identifying the operational requirements of the vehicle in terms of the cubic capacity, the ergonomic considerations to make sure that we're keeping our carriers safe. Our challenge is going to be to work within a future potential supplier to keep as many of those operational requirements, human factors, ergonomic requirements intact.

**Sperry:** Williams says the Postal Service is not yet ready to declare a winning technology.

**Williams:** So we've got to bridge that gap between keeping the current fleet going in the most cost efficient manner until such time as we make the decision on what the right technology is that will support us into the future. It could be clean diesel, it could be a more efficient gasoline, it could be hybrid, it could be a plug-in hybrid. There are so many different technologies out there that are viable.

#### (Biggest Loser Segment)

**Watkins:** Some of us would love to lose a little weight. But for many Americans, obesity is a serious condition that can lead to other medical complications. Pete Nowacki reports on a Minneapolis postal manager and his daughter, whose personal Battle of the Bulge became part of a nationally-televised story.

**Pete Nowacki:** Eight short months ago, O'Neal Hampton found the simple task of climbing a flight of stairs almost too difficult to perform. Weighing in at more than 400 pounds, he faced a laundry list of potential health problems. Hampton, who is manager at Elmwood Station in suburban Minneapolis, knew that his life had to change, he just didn't know how. Then out of the blue he got a very important phone call.

**O'Neal Hampton:** I got a phone call from my daughter, SunShine Hampton. "Wow," she said. "Dad, please don't be mad at me." I said, SunShine, what did you do? And she said, "I just auditioned for the Biggest Loser and they want us," me and her, "to come down for another audition." I thought, wow, you've got to be kidding me.

**Nowacki:** The Biggest Loser is a popular NBC-TV show that pits overweight people against one another in a contest to lose the greatest percentage of their body weight. The Hampton's were one of 11 couples selected to compete in the show's most recent season. Over the course of six months, the pair worked with trainers, nutritionists, and other medical personnel. They carved pounds off their bodies, and built a new healthy lifestyle for themselves.

Back from the Biggest Loser Ranch, the Hamptons are still eating right and working out everyday. I spoke with O'Neal as he took a break from a recent workout. So how much do you weigh now, O'Neal?

**Hampton:** Right now, today, I currently weigh about 220 pounds.

**Nowacki:** How are you feeling?

**Hampton:** Oh my God -- absolutely wonderful. I really, really got a new lease on life. I feel like a brand new me. Losing over 165 pounds is just, it's incredible.

**Nowacki:** Can you describe some of the support that you received from the Postal Service in taking on this challenge?

**Hampton:** Any major change you have in your life you need a support network. And I can honestly say my postal family was huge to me. I could not have done it without the help and support of the United States Postal Service. It was a simple choice, either get healthy or them going to my funeral.

**Nowacki:** When you watch the show, the emphasis is on the grueling physical challenge that you and SunShine were put through. But you've said there's something else that's a lot more important.

**Hampton:** The real thing that's important that really sustained the weight loss is nutrition. Nutrition is so important because, believe me, you can out eat yourself a lot quicker than you can out exercise yourself.

**Nowacki:** If you could give one piece of advice to someone else looking to make a similar change, what would that be?

**Hampton:** Please stop the procrastination. Make the change. Like me, get a good support network. Take the steps in a small, methodical, gradual way. Do not try to conquer the whole hill in one leap and bound. You'll get tired, you'll get sore, and you won't be back the next day.

**Nowacki:** So what's next for you?

**Hampton:** I'd like to go around speaking to every Post Office, if I can, to explain to them that it can be done. Now my productivity in every shape, form, and fashion of my life is so huge now. Saving on the sick leave is so huge. That's what I'd like to do, I'd like to pay it forward by spreading the word of good health.

**Nowacki:** O'Neal and Sunshine Hampton were eliminated from competition before the Biggest Loser finale. They didn't bring home the cash, but they won so much more. In Minneapolis, I'm Pete Nowacki for Your Postal Podcast.

(Big Ideas Segment)

**Watkins:** The Postal Service's challenges are well documented. And nearly everyone has an opinion on how to help. If you were in charge, what ideas would you like to see implemented? Lisa Nystuen reports on "Big Ideas."

**Lisa Nystuen:** The Postal Service's challenges are well-known. Looking for answers, Your Postal Blog recently went on an expedition for "Big Ideas" that might help fix the Postal Service both for today and into the future. The blog asked employees for their take on ways to save the Postal Service, and what they had to say was insightful, creative and definitely interesting. Here's a few of the more intriguing ideas:

One big idea was to sponsor a nationwide lottery. Just think. The only place you could buy your Megabucks ticket would be at the local Post Office.

And then there was a similar suggestion for a “Gold Ticket” insertion into a selected book of stamps. Willie Wonka used The Gold Ticket idea to sell millions of candy bars. Why not do the same? Instead of a trip to L’Enfant plaza, maybe we could just offer a cool million dollars to every ticket holder? Maybe we could throw in a dinner with Jack Potter? Stamps would sell like never before.

One suggested a Postmaster serve several towns with a traveling Post Office mobile van, delivering mail and selling stamps at various locations.

And how about the idea of establishing coffee shops in every level 18 and below office. “Customers just hang out anyway,” they said.

And how about mandating centralized delivery across the nation like another suggested? No more door-to-door delivery.

Well there you have it—some creative and...interesting ideas on how we can survive the next fiscal year. Do you have any ideas you’d like to add? You can go to [www.yourpostalblog.com](http://www.yourpostalblog.com) and let your voice be heard – you might just have the answer we’re looking for.

**Watkins:** And now, here's a brief rundown of Postal Service headlines... The Postal Service and Hallmark have introduced a new line of postage-paid greeting postcards. The postcards use Intelligent Mail barcode technology, allowing customers to buy them with pre-paid postage — also referred to as “Alternate Postage Payment.”

The postcards come in packs of eight, which will be available in 2,000 Hallmark Gold Crown Stores across the country.

Hallmark research suggests that making First-Class Mail easier to mail encourages consumers to send more greeting cards. With pre-paid postcards, customers won’t have to buy postage — or be concerned about how much postage is needed.

Barcode sorters performing IMb scans during normal mail processing will track the number of postcards entering the mail stream to calculate Hallmark’s total postage payment.

To comply with legislation passed by Congress and signed into law by the President, cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products will be subject to new mailing regulations effective June 29th this year.

With only a few limited exceptions, the Postal Service will no longer be allowed to accept or transport packages containing cigarettes or smokeless tobacco products. The general mailability ban will extend to cigarettes, roll-your-own tobacco and smokeless tobacco. The prohibition does not include cigars.

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