New Vehicles Speed Mail, Parcel Post Deliveries

Mail volume in the Klamath Falls area contributed to a new national record of nearly 64 billion pieces of mail, including a billion pieces of parcel post, during fiscal year 1960 ending last June 30, Postmaster C. L. Langslet said.

Based on advance information from the annual report of the department, which has been made available to Langslet, it was revealed that the present day figures represent an increase of 25 per cent over the 1953 volume which totaled 50.9 billion pieces.

This increase, along with a sharp discontinuance of mail - carrying trains in recent years, has helped foster a complete revolution in postal transportation including far more extensive use of highway vehicles, he said.

Today, 85 per cent of the vast postal vehicle fleet, operating under a modernization and improvement program initiated in 1954, is composed largely of new types of standard, commercial, lightweight, maneuverable vehicles. This conversion, he noted, has meant the "retirement" of worn out units—many in use for ten years or more—which in turn, has greatly reduced maintenance costs for the postal service.

Described as a vital part of this program which was launched approximately seven years ago under the direction of Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield, vehicle unit purchases during fiscal year 1960 amounted to more than 8,500, compared with 115 similar purchases during fiscal year 1953.

The motor vehicle inventory on June 30, 1953, was 18,969, and although the 1960 statistics are not yet in final form, it is estimated that more than 34,000 new vehicles have been purchased since fiscal year 1954 and that with the "retirement" of old vehicles the inventory total on June 30 of this year was just a little under 37,000 vehicles.

Still another development of vital importance in connection with motor vehicle service is the fact that 119 new maintenance facilities have been constructed since January 1953 to service this fleet. Ten more were under construction on June 30 and 25 more are now in the planning stage.

Other figures in the preliminary 1960 report reveal that the post offices which have motor vehicle service available total more than 3,600 while the corresponding figure for fiscal year 1953 was 2,433. The total miles traveled in fiscal year 1960 is estimated as a shade under 400 million, compared with approximately 200 million in fiscal year 1953.

One of the most outstanding features of this motor vehicle improvement program is the mechanization of foot delivery routes which was first mentioned in the Annual Report for fiscal year 1958. This revealed that the motor vehicle inventory for June 30 of that year showed 1,914 "very light vehicles and mailsters" with the notation that this figure included certain vehicles previously reported in the truck category. In the 1959 report this item had climbed to a little over 5,000 and the preliminary estimate from the 1960 table shows 5,816.

Advance reports clearly indicate that this part of the mechanization program will be handled at a much faster rate in fiscal 1961. Commitments already have been made for extensive installations of two-cylinder mailsters and four-cylinder right-hand drive trucks which underwent exhaustive tests and have been found to be highly satisfactory. On the basis of experience with more than 5,700 mailsters now in operation, it has been estimated that each one saves the taxpayers a net of $300 a year.

In Oregon it is estimated that the total number of motor vehicle units regularly in operation is approximately 353 compared with 37 back in 1953. Langslet also pointed out that there have been literally scores of organizational and operational changes during this seven-year improvement program and that each one of them is directed toward the more efficient and more economical operation of the Post Office Department.

Some of the more significant of these are decentralization of postal operating management out of the Post Office Department in Washington, D.C., by setting up 15 regional headquarters offices; adoption of modern business accounting and financial procedures; utilization of the latest types of electronic machines; elimination of hand-prepared checks, payroll and others, at each post office by making payments from regional offices with estimated net savings of 20 million dollars a year; introduction of new concepts of personnel management for the benefit and welfare of more than half a million postal employes, including both training programs for promotions and safety programs to reduce on-the-job accidents.

REPLACING the old antiquated vehicles of yesterday is the new "Mailmaster," economical, lightweight, and extremely maneuverable.

THIS 1906 U.S. mail truck, loaded with sacks of letters and parcels destined for delivery within cities and towns, is a sharp contrast to the new vehicles.

Early Postage Rates Costly

Early postage rates were costly. Postage in 1789 for a letter weighing less than one ounce and composed of a single sheet of paper was six cents for a distance of 30 miles. The rate reached a maximum of 25 cents for more than 400 miles.

If a letter had more than one sheet, the postage was doubled, or tripled, depending on the number of sheets.

Before 1855, when new law required everybody to pay postage in advance, mailers could and often did send their letters collect on delivery.

This meant, of course, that letters would often be refused. It is interesting to note, too, that when George Washington retired from the presidency, Congress provided he was to get free postage on all letters going to him.

In 1847 legislation was enacted authorizing the Postmaster General to issue stamps, and the first adhesive stamps for prepayment of postage went on sale in New York City that same year.

THE COVER

The U.S. Postal Service faces the onslaught of Christmas mail this year with new methods, new techniques, new equipment, and new hope that one day we will have our fabulous mail problem licked.

Some of the objectives, the problems and the solutions to those problems are outlined today in the Sunday Supplement.

The cover photo shows Leslie Shaw, a veteran of 12 years with the Klamath Falls post office department. Shaw, a parcel post truck driver, lives at 820 Newcastle.

B. Franklin First U.S. Postmaster

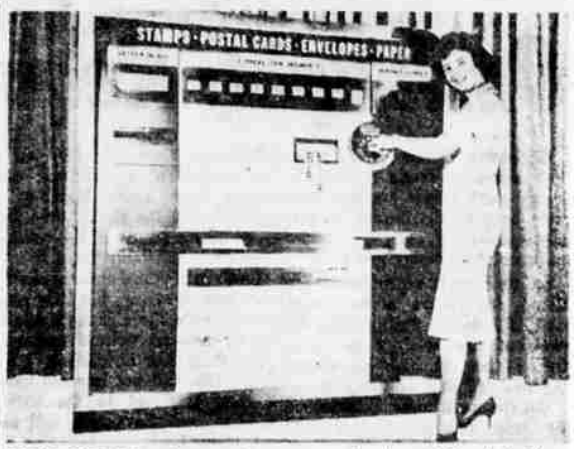
The first official postal system in the United States, established by the general court of Massachusetts in 1639, provided for all mail arriving from abroad to be delivered to Richard Fairbanks of Boston, who forwarded each letter to its destination for a penny each.

In 1672 a monthly post between New York City and Boston was set up by Governor Lovelace of New York. The route followed what is now the Bost Post Road—U.S. Route 1.

In 1691 the British Crown appointed Andrew Hamilton of Edinburgh as its first Postmaster General for the American colonies. Benjamin Franklin who was later to become the first Postmaster General under the Continental Congress, took his first postal appointment in 1737 as postmaster at Philadelphia.

Franklin became joint postmaster general for the north British colonies in America in 1753 and served until 1774. He was appointed head of the American Postal System by the Continental Congress in 1775. His salary was $1,000 a year, and he served until 1776.

In 1789, President George Washington appointed Samual Osgood of Massachusetts Postmaster General.



THIS MODEL of a customer-operated postal substation will someday find its way into thousands of post offices throughout the nation. The machine vends a choice of three denominations of stamps, two sizes of stamped envelopes, a book of stamps, a postal card, and a sheet of writing paper and returns correct change.

Surprise Gift

SAN RAFAEL, Calif. (AP) — Cadets at San Rafael Military Academy, restive from months of discipline, gave their dean a pre-Thanksgiving Day present.

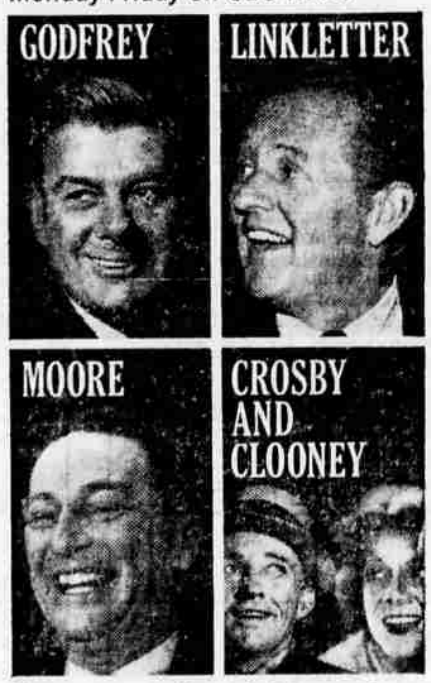
When retired Army Col. Robert S. Nourse, a West Point graduate, showed up for work Tuesday morning, he found a wall of pink concrete blocks 10 feet tall and four feet wide blocking his door.

Nourse said there would be no disciplinary action.

STARTING TOMORROW

HEAR THEM ALL IN THE MORNING!

Monday-Friday on CBS Radio



Now—more morning entertainment from more great stars than anywhere else on your radio dial. They brighten every weekday on the station that brings you more and more good listening.

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Listen once—you'll make it a habit!

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