

May Is A Busy Month At Post Offices

By Anne Murray, Postmaster Ft Myers/Cape Coral

Fort Myers, Cape Coral FL – May brings major events to Fort Myers and Cape Coral Post offices: the annual letter carrier food drive, postage price change, mailbox improvement, and dog bite prevention week.

National Letter Carrier Food Drive. The annual National Letter Carrier Food Drive will be on Saturday, May 9. Letter carriers will be collecting non-perishable food items left by mail receptacles. All donations will remain in the community to feed the hungry; the majority of the food is donated to the Harry Chapin Food Banks, whose need is greater than ever this year. Their over 150 participating agencies have seen a 30-70 percent increase in people seeking assistance. The Post Office is seeking volunteers who would be able to assist with the food drive. Anyone interested is asked to call 573-9638.

Postage Increase. Yes, postage is increasing on Monday, May 11. First-class, one ounce letters will now be 44 cents—up two cents; additional ounces will continue to cost 17 cents. Customers can continue to use the “forever” stamps they purchased at the 42-cent rate even after the pricing change; starting on May 11, the “forever” stamp will be 44 cents and will continue to be available in booklets of 20 stamps.

The Postal Service is a business and, like all other businesses, must raise its prices to cover expenses. The Postal Service does NOT receive tax dollars to cover the cost of operations. When fuel costs increase just one penny, the Postal Service costs increase more than \$15 million.

At 44 cents, a stamp is still one of the best bargains in the United States. In fact, even if you mail a letter or card every single day, you'll only pay several dollars more for postage for the entire year. When compared to annual increases in other household expenses, such as groceries, health care and utilities, the Postal Service continues to be an economical choice for shipping and mailing during tough economic times.

Mailbox Improvement. Each year the Postal Service designates the third full week of May to encourage customers on city motorized, rural, or highway contract box delivery routes to examine and, where necessary, improve the appearance of their mailboxes. Neat, attractive mailboxes make a significant contribution to the appearance of the countryside and to streets in suburban areas.

This year, a contest was held during March and April to see which postal customers could make the greatest improvements to their mailboxes. Entries were judged by the Postal Service's Consumer Advisory Council and the winners in Fort Myers and Cape Coral were announced on April 16. The winning entries can be seen at the Page Field and Cape Coral Central post offices.

Dogbite Prevention Week. Also in May, the Post Office participates in the annual observance of dog bite prevention. From nips and bites to actual attacks, violent dog behavior continues to pose a serious threat to mail carriers. Letter carriers are the third most likely group to be bitten by a dog. Each year, several thousand Postal Service employees are victimized by dogs.

At this point in our nation's history, even the comedians know that “dog bites man” is no longer laughing matter. Most people think children and dogs go together naturally, and they often do, but it may shock you to learn that children are the most common victims of dog bites.

For more information about purchasing stamps, stamps by mail, postal regulations, a free subscription to USA Philatelic magazine, Post Office events, the location of the nearest postal store or contract unit, or for answers to your specific Postal Service questions, contact USPS at 1-800-275-8777, or visit www.usps.com.

To schedule a presentation for your community, club or group on how the Postal Service brings the Post Office to your home or office computer, call 239-573-9638.