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Consumers Trust the Mail

U.S. Postal Service Climbs Two Points in 'Most Trusted Company' Survey; Remains 'Most Trusted Government Agency'

WASHINGTON — The Postal Service ranks as the fourth most trusted company — a two-point increase from 2011 and its highest company ranking since the survey's inception by the premier privacy trust study in America. The same survey also named The Postal Service the 'Most Trusted Government Agency' for the 7th year in a row**

The Ponemon Institute in its *Most Trusted Companies for Privacy Study* ranked the Postal Service as the fourth most trusted company of 704 entries from 25 industry sectors. The results show that customers regard the Postal Service as one of the best in keeping their information safe and secure.

"We are honored to be among the top five most trusted companies in the country. Our employees work hard each day to maintain that trust," said Krista Finazzo, consumer advocate. "We know our customers depend on the security of the mail and they trust and expect the Postal Service to protect their privacy."

Finazzo attributed the high ranking, in part, to the trusted relationship Americans have with letter carriers who deliver mail to every home and business. Despite the vast size of the Postal Service's network and scope of operations, many customers know their letter carriers by name and see them as welcomed and trusted members of the local community they serve each day, she said.

"Consumer confidence in the mail is a priority for the Postal Service. Each day we process nearly 40 percent of the world's mail to more addresses in a larger geographical region than any other postal service in the world. Customers expect us to protect the privacy of their personal information. We do not take this responsibility lightly," Finazzo said.

The survey asked adult-aged consumers to name up to five companies they believe to be the most trusted to protect the privacy of their personal information, based on the company's ability to handle and protect their information. Questions ranged from factors creating trust in the company and the levels of confidence consumers have in the company to protect their information — including information provided on websites — to limiting the amount of information collected.

Survey respondents also listed worries they had about how their privacy rights are possibly undermined by new technologies such as social media, smart mobile devices and geo-tracking tools. Despite this concern, 63 percent of respondents admit to sharing sensitive personal information with an unknown organization mainly when making purchases.

"We believe this survey validates the Postal Service's commitment to privacy and excellent customer

service which are both key to building trusted consumer relationships," said Dr. Larry Ponemon, chairman and founder of Ponemon Institute. "And we are pleased to recognize the U.S. Postal Service as one of the most trusted organizations overall and among government agencies."

Copies of the *2012 Privacy Trust Study of the United States Government* are available by contacting the Ponemon Institute at www.ponemon.org.

*The Ponemon Institute plans to release its *2012 Privacy Trust Study of the United States Government* later in the year. Details relative to the Postal Service's top rating will be released at that time. The results mentioned in this release focus exclusively on the results from the *2012 Most Trusted Companies for Privacy* survey which included a broad category of companies. The survey briefly mentions the Postal Service's top trust rating among all government entities.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation, 151 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes. The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. With 32,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, usps.com, the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$65 billion and delivers nearly 40 percent of the world's mail. If it were a private sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 35th in the 2011 Fortune 500. In 2011, the U.S. Postal Service was ranked number one in overall service performance, out of the top 20 wealthiest nations in the world, Oxford Strategic Consulting. Black Enterprise and Hispanic Business magazines ranked the Postal Service as a leader in workforce diversity. The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency for six years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.

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Ponemon Institute, LLC is dedicated to advancing responsible information and privacy management practices in business and government. To achieve this objective, the Institute conducts independent research, educates leaders from the private and public sectors and verifies the privacy data protection practices of organizations in a variety of industries.