



## Struggling with Employee Retention?

*A Word from the GBPCC Industry Co-Chair,  
Judith E. Antidel*



Remember “Back on the Chain Gang” by the Pretenders? That song was released in 1982 and here we are 30 years later wondering what in the world has happened to our supply chain? Where is the chain gang? Pundits may say we gave too much money away for free during the pandemic so who wants to work for a living? I’m not a political animal and I offer no judgement here, but the question remains. Where have all the workers gone? A better question might be what we can do about it. Let me share what I have noticed and maybe some of these ideas will work for you.

- Bad idea # 1 – Spend lots of money putting money ads on a billboard hoping to attract employees.
- Bad idea # 2 – Hiring new people and pay them more than the ones you already employ.
- Bad idea # 3 - Tell your current staff that it’s too bad but everyone needs to work more hours. (Even I have tried this tactic over the years, and it works for a while until everyone is so taxed, they crash).
- Good idea # 1 – Be upfront with your clients and ask them to build in more time for work and delivery.
- Good idea # 2 – Be honest about what dates you can deliver the goods up front.
- Good idea # 3 – Ask your staff for input on how to do things better and faster and listen to what they say!

For over 34 years I have run a business in this industry. In the beginning I did the work myself and I have never forgotten how taxing or hard that can be. So, start there. Sit everyone down, offer referral incentives, find ways to cut costs even if its your own paycheck and give raises and benefit’s. Work alongside your staff and listen and address their concerns. Be honest, be reliable and be kind. Like most hardships in life this is temporary. Remember that. “Now we’re back on the train, Oh back on the chain gang.”

## 2022 Events

Feb 16 - Mitigating Supply Chain Issues, *via Zoom*

March 10 - Digital Mail Solutions, *via Zoom*

April 8 - MDP Study Group, *via Zoom*

April 22 - CAC Facility Tour & Direct Mail Communications

April 26 - Enhancing the Customer Experience with Informed Delivery Advertising/Data, *via Zoom*

May 6 - Spirit of Baltimore Cruise, *with teambuilding discussion*

May 15-18 - NPF, Phoenix, AZ

June 15 - USPS Rate Changes, *via Zoom*

July 22- GBPCC Membership Meeting & Crab Feast

*For more information or to registers, please visit [GreaterBaltimorePCC.org](http://GreaterBaltimorePCC.org)*

# Fall General Membership Meeting Highlights

By Jennifer Hoyer,  
GBPCC Industry Vice Co-Chair

The GBPCC and WMPCC joint Fall General Membership Meeting, on Friday, December 3, 2021, at the Crown Plaza Annapolis, was a wonderful in-person event filled with education, networking, awards, and a fun teambuilding exercise!

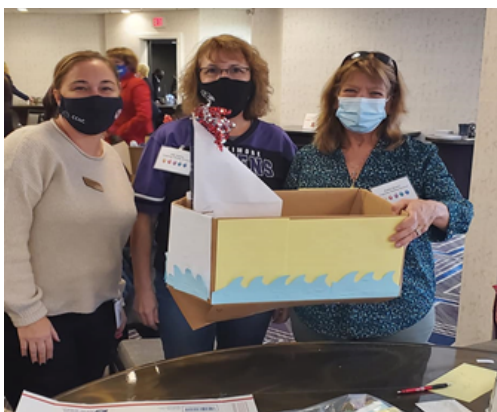


Presenters Coakley Workman (VP, USPS Delivery and Retail Operations) and Leo Raymond (President, Mailers Hub) discussed the USPS 10-Year Plan and 2022 Mailing Promotions. The speakers worked in tandem with each other providing a complete picture of the Plan as well as critical information on what mailers need to do to prepare.

Highlights of the Awards ceremony included the Joe Fetcho Award which was presented to Ron and Dotty Wileman as well as the Tyra Womack Award which was presented to Barbara Braxton-Morgan. Congratulations to all award winners!

Neal Fedderman (Senior Manager Mail Operations, CarMax) discussed the importance of teambuilding and led attendees on a teambuilding exercise in true Annapolis style – attendees were tasked with building a boat and “selling” everyone there as to why their boat was the best. Attendees had lots of fun and provided some creative pitches about their boats.

As one attendee noted, “it was a great event especially in this time and was so heartwarming to see people, shake hands, and just talk to them.” Here is to many more in-person GBPCC events to come!



From Left: Alex Skidmore (CCBC), Judy Hudson (CMS, Inc.), and Bobbie Benner (CMS, Inc.) display their boat during the team building exercise.



Award Winners from Left: Judy Antidel (Full Sail Media), Sherry Harper (USPS), Barbara Braxton-Morgan (USPS), Lisa Harris (USPS), Tina Dickens (Centers for Medicare), Jennifer Hoyer (CMS, Inc.), and Jim Barlow (Mail Systems Management).

# USPS 2021 Peak Season Update

By Eric Gilbert, USPS, Postmaster Baltimore City (A)

The holiday season was a real bear for the U.S. Postal Service, with businesses and gift-givers nervous that high volume, combined with existing issues within the USPS as a result of the pandemic, would spoil the holiday season.

However, the USPS just announced that 96.9% of its shipments were on time during a two-week period in December, indicating that it handled the holiday rush almost flawlessly. Being a noticeable improvement over the agency's 2020 numbers. This time last year, a third of first-class mail was late for the holidays.



The organization's strategy and planning to have "A Peak Like no other" attributed the USPS's success to people shipping things early to ensure it arrived on time. This was something the USPS and others like FedEx and UPS warned about even as early as the end of the summer, imploring people to ship early if they want to be sure things arrived by Christmas.

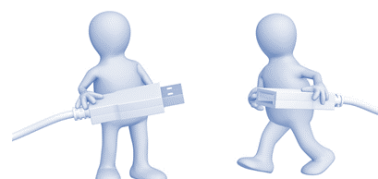
Also in 2021, the organization installed 112 new package sorting machines, promoted more than 60,000 pre-career employees to "career employee" status, hired 40,000 seasonal workers and acquired additional space in more than 100 locations. USPS reported fewer employees needing to quarantine than last year, which aided the effort. Last year, 6,500 postal workers were forced to quarantine, compared to only 1,900 this year during the holiday peak.

We got those deliveries off just before the buzzer, though, as this week the USPS reported nearly 8,000 postal workers requiring quarantine, even despite the CDC's new relaxed quarantine guidelines.

Staffing shortages and other pandemic-related issues will remain a challenge for shippers moving forward. But the holiday results are an encouraging sign that the United States Postal Service is adjusting to these challenges.

## Stay Connected to the National PCC Community!

**Join the PCC Voice on LinkedIn**  
(<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8303549/>)

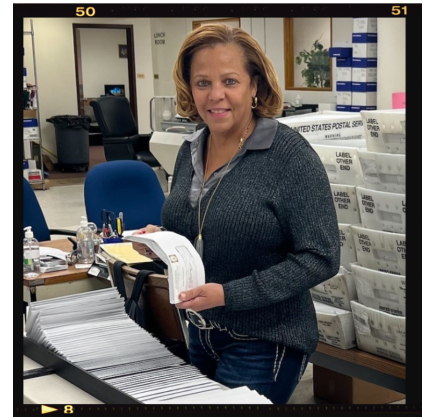


**Remember to use #GBPCC on your posts!**

## GBPCC Member Spotlight: Charmaine Callahan, City of Baltimore Municipal Post Office

As Maryland's largest city and economic center, Baltimore constitutes the northeastern hub of the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area. Centrally-located in downtown Baltimore, the Municipal Post Office (MPO), serves as a mailing house for all Baltimore City government agencies. The MPO occupies 2000 square feet and processes approx. 7 million pieces of mail annually.

As Operations Manager of the MPO, Charmaine Callahan is integral to the GBPCC's work. She directly contributes to developing network opportunities and consistently works to gain first-hand knowledge of postal operations and technologies to improve service delivery for the City of Baltimore's MPO. This exposure gives access to the subject matter from expert USPS representatives; increasing members' knowledge of postal operations and how it relates to mailing technology.



Baltimore City's Municipal Post Office is located at 100 Guilford Avenue in Baltimore, Maryland. It is a department inside the Office of the Comptroller, Bill Henry.

**“What makes the GBPCC special is that it provides personal attention to big business level issues,” Callahan says. “Everyone seated at the table has a voice.”**

Thanks to Charmaine's leadership, in her tenure the MPO is now a full-service mailing house. She's overhauled aging infrastructure by investing in new and updated electronic machines, inserters, a sorting machine, and several metering machines. The MPO mail services, as well as the USPS-GBPCC, continued to operate with non-stop service during the pandemic, while still maintaining the safety of all staff and employees. With a focus on increased and efficient customer service, and knowledge of changing USPS protocols and mail regulations, this partnership between the MPO and GBPCC has helped Charmaine and her staff to succeed in their mandate of serving as an intermediary with the USPS for all mail coming to and from city agencies.

### Kudos Korner

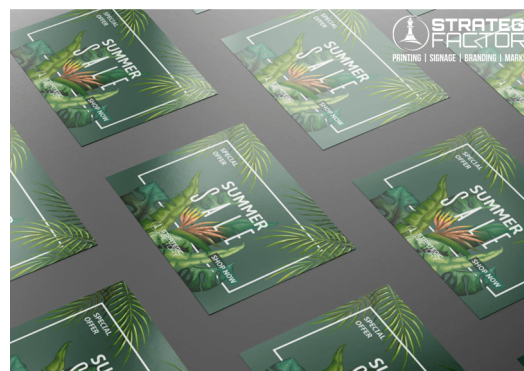
The GBPCC would like to recognize [Lisa Harris at the USPS](#) for her outstanding customer service!

- "On New Years' Eve, my staff realized the Postal Trailer had not been dropped at our facility the night before. I contacted Lisa and within the hour a trailer was dispatched and arrived at our dock. My employees were ecstatic!" - Jen Hoyer, CMS, Inc.
- "My staff informed me that the USPS did not collect our outbound mail for 2 consecutive days. I e-mailed Lisa Harris & Eric Gilbert. Lisa immediately called asking how she could assist. The problem was addressed & resolved within the hour. Mr. Gilbert dispatched a carrier to collect the mail. Kudos to Lisa & Mr. Gilbert for demonstrating outstanding customer service & support. Job well done!!" - Rod Toney, The Johns Hopkins Hospital
- "During the Christmas rush, Lisa helped get me in touch with the right person at a small Post Office in New York State to find a misdirected package and get it delivered for the holidays." - Sally Pfabe, Fearless

# Why Direct Mail Is the Solution for Your Business Right Now

By Brenda Niemeyer, Strategic Factory

The start of a new year is a great time to re-engage with your current customers and get in touch with prospective customers. You can take advantage of a few different solutions, but one of the most effective ways to communicate with your customers & prospects is through direct mail. According to the United States Postal Services, direct mail is often kept by the recipient for several days, encouraging them to follow up or take action, [leading to a 28% conversion rate](#).



Direct mail is physical mail delivered directly to the mailboxes of your customers and/or prospects. You can send your mail piece to a specific audience or send it to a broader audience within a specific region. With direct mail, your business commands the receiver's attention with something tangible. Direct mail can help you find new customers, drive repeat business, communicate important messaging, and highlight promotions for 2022.

Several benefits come with a direct mail campaign. You can take advantage of a targeted list, so you can reach out to only the customers or prospects you want to. Direct mail can be personalized with names and other personal information to encourage your customers or prospects to engage and take action. It's also a cost-effective marketing tool to generate leads, increase ROI, and boost brand recognition for your company.

## Call for Exhibitors at PCC Day 2022

The GBPCC is the only PCC in the US to earn the Postal Customer Council of the Year award 3 times (2 as Large Market and the most recent under the new category of Metro Market). In honor of this achievement, the GBPCC will be celebrating and will be honored with a high-ranking USPS official (typically the Postmaster General, who is currently Louis DeJoy) as our keynote speaker at National PCC Day/Week 2022!

The GBPCC is starting preparations for our PCC Day event which will be held in the Baltimore area the week of September 19, 2022. Be sure to mark your calendars now!

In addition to speakers, vendors are invited to showcase their products/services at the event. Reserve your space early to ensure prime booth location! To do so, please contact GBPCC Board member and vendor coordinator, Jennifer Hoyer at [JenH@whycms.com](mailto:JenH@whycms.com). And stay tuned for more event details!



## It's Time to Renew Your GBPCC Membership for 2022

Contact Lisa Harris at [Lisa.L.Harris@usps.gov](mailto:Lisa.L.Harris@usps.gov)  
Or call at (410) 347-4493

*If you are a mail service provider, printer, or work in the industry we are here to help you navigate the upcoming changes and provide solutions to grow your business.*

**ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF  
MEMBERSHIP**



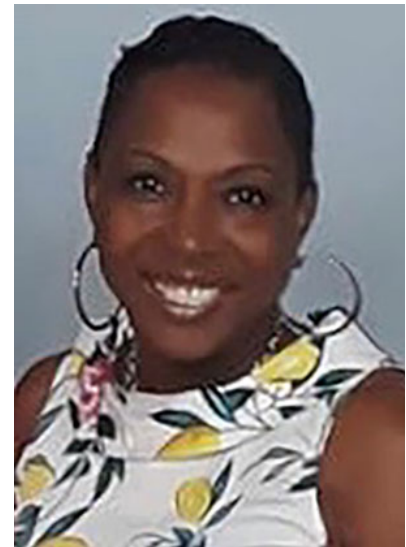
There are many benefits of joining the Greater Baltimore PCC including networking, access to decision makers, personal development, certifications, ideas to grow your business, USPS and industry updates and resolutions to current issues. Our local PCC has been recognized as best in the nation for 3 out of the last 7 years!

*By joining you will hear from the most celebrated speakers and thought providers in the industry, join forces with your peers, gain access to a national chain of courses and instruction, development tools and information that only you can find by becoming a member.*

***Please visit [www.greaterbaltimorepcc.org](http://www.greaterbaltimorepcc.org) to register for your 2022 GBPCC Membership!***

## Congratulations Olivia Sharp-Buster!

On December 31st, 2021, Olivia Sharp Buster retired after 41 years of dedicated service to the US Postal Service. Olivia was a great educator and contributor to the success of the Baltimore District throughout the years. She made a lasting impression in every position she held at the Postal Service. Olivia was an active member in GBPCC and became an Executive Board Member in 2020. Throughout the years, she has put assisting our customers her number one priority.



An overview of Olivia's career:

- 1981- 1985 Transferred from Social Security as a Letter Sorting Operator and Zone Papers Crew
- 1985-2004 Window Clerk at Catonsville, Northwood, Druid Hill, Clifton Park and Raspeburg Stations
- 2004-2014 Bulk Mail Tech worked, Baltimore Sun Paper, CAC, Harte Hanks, Barton Cotton, Corporate Mailing Services and many other Mail Service.
- 2014-2016 District Marketing, Business Development Specialist
- 2016-2017 Headquarter Sales, Field Account Representative (FAR)
- 2017-2021 Headquarter Sales, Sales Executive until Retirement

***We will miss Olivia's beautiful smile and dedication, but we wish her well as she starts the next chapter of her life.***

# GBPCC Executive Board

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**ERIC GILBERT**

*USPS - Postmaster Baltimore (A)*

## INDUSTRY CHAIRPERSON

**JUDITH ANTISDEL**

*AT Direct*

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**LISA HARRIS**

*USPS-Customer Relations Coordinator*

## VICE-INDUSTRY CHAIRPERSON

**JENNIFER HOYER**

*Corporate Mailing Services, Inc.*

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

**BARBARA BRAXTON-MORGAN**  
*USPS-Manager Customer Relations*

**LORA MCLUCAS**  
*USPS - Maryland District Manager*

**LIA JOHNSON**  
*USPS - District Sales Manager*

**SHAWNEE DUKES**  
*USPS - Consumer Affairs Manager*

**YOLANDA JACKSON-FINCH**  
*CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield*

**JOHN FETCHO**  
*CAC Direct Marketing Services*

**JAN KEADLE**  
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**LISA KLINE**  
**(PAST INDUSTRY CO-CHAIR)**  
*Double Envelope*

**JAMES BARLOW**  
**(PAST INDUSTRY CO-CHAIR)**  
*Mail Systems Management*

## Continued Supply Chain Challenges

*By Tim Birdsong, Roosevelt Paper Company*

Supplies of domestic paper remain tight and will continue for a variety of factors. Shipping costs from overseas (Asia and Europe) have increased from \$10,000 per container to \$25,000 per container in slightly over a year. This makes the North American paper market unattractive for export from Europe and Asia. Another key factor is demand for packaging. Since the start of the CV-19 pandemic, home delivery of consumer goods has surged in popularity. The key item to make your typical brown box is un-bleached kraft pulp. As it is more expensive to manufacture bleached (white) pulp items such as cosmetic packaging, copy paper and magazine coated grades have increased over 30% in price since this time last year. Ground freight continues to suffer from a shortage of drivers, fuel cost increases of 33% over the November 2020 to December 2021 time frame and supply chain issues with repair parts. Given these variables fine paper and uncoated paper have had significant mill closures that have reduced domestic capacity in the past few years. Verso closed the Luke, MD mill (coated fine paper) in the summer of 2019. International Paper closed the Courtland, Alabama mill in the fall of 2013 (copy paper). Sappi North America rebuilt a paper machine in Skowhegan, Maine that made fine paper and changed production capability toward luxury packaging grades by fall of 2018. In this time frame other mills have been closed or re-purposed to make recycled brown pulp. High demand for packaging grades, diminished capacity for fine paper and high pulp prices combined with the North American market remaining unattractive for importing paper will keep paper prices high for 2022.

*Price and availability subject to change within 24 hours due to market conditions*



**GREATER BALTIMORE  
POSTAL CUSTOMER COUNCIL**

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