



There *are* Alternatives to Canada Post's Vision of the Modern Post

CUPW has a vision of our post office. Our vision is a public post office providing quality service to everyone no matter where they live and accountable to the public and Parliament.

Our vision is very different than the one Canada Post President Moya Greene is promoting to business and media audiences. She's been saying that the corporation's multi-billion dollar modernization plans will allow Canada Post to compete and succeed in a deregulated market. CUPW isn't willing to concede that the future includes a deregulated postal service.

So far, Greene has been talking to largely business audiences. At regional forums between January and

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Modernization will transform our work

Canada Post has announced a major investment to modernize the post office. This will transform the work of postal workers for years to come. The corporation has only provided the initial notice under 29.03(a) of the urban operations collective agreement so there are not too many details yet.

We do know their plans include:

1. Mechanized sequencing of mail for letter carriers and rural and suburban mail carriers (RSMCs); mechanized collating of admail, increased motorization
2. New generation mail processing equipment
3. New technology in parcel operations
4. New plants in Winnipeg and Vancouver and investment in other facilities

And we do know their plans could have a devastating impact on jobs in the future.

Canada Post hopes to eventually recover the costs of this massive investment through huge productivity

improvements. That increased productivity could eliminate jobs in every community and in every local. CUPW's position is that new technology should result in improved conditions for postal workers and expanded services for the public.

Manufacturing a crisis

It was only a few years ago that the Minister Responsible for Canada Post said we have the best postal service in the world. Since then volumes have increased, delivery performance has improved, and Canada Post has continued to make significant profits every year.

Yet suddenly we are being told there is a crisis and radical solutions are needed.

In addition to Canada Post's announcement of a \$1.7 billion investment to modernize the post, in recent months:

- The Conference Board of Canada has released a major study calling for a mandate review of Canada Post to examine the possibility of deregulation and privatization. Canada Post is a member of the Conference Board.
- The C.D. Howe Institute has issued a report calling for the privatization and deregulation of Canada Post Corporation. Canada Post is a member of the Institute.
- The federal government has introduced Bill C-14 to partially deregulate postal services and legalize the illegal actions of private sector remailers.
- The Minister Responsible for Canada Post is considering a mandate review.

There are many forces, including the federal government, preparing to attack our public postal service. Canada Post appears unwilling to put up a fight. Once again, it is up to postal workers and our allies to defend the public post office.

CUPW's position on technological change

Policy A-14 has been in the CUPW National Constitution since 1983. This policy outlines the union's approach to technological change.

....technology ought to be of benefit to workers and the public at large.....the union insists that any technological change that is introduced by Canada Post Corporation must materially benefit the members....The union will use all of its powers, including industrial action, to eliminate all adverse effects of technological change.

We have negotiated strong protections against the adverse effects of technological change in the urban operations collective agreement, including many of the collective bargaining principles identified in A-14.

Our approach has traditionally been that we will not oppose technological change provided the benefits are shared, not only by management in improved productivity and efficiency, but also by workers, in improved working conditions and job security, and the public, in improved service.

Canada Post must live up to its contractual commitment in clause 29.02 of the urban operations collective agreement to eliminate adverse effects. We are insisting that Canada Post apply the same commitment to members who fall under the rural and suburban mail carrier contract. Article 29 maps out a process for notice, consultation, negotiation and arbitration of unresolved differences prior to the actual introduction of the new equipment or work processes.

Canada Post must reach an agreement with the union on ways to reduce the impact on jobs, improve working conditions and enhance job opportunities for the membership.

- The building of new plants offers opportunities to create healthier and safer work environments.
- Every piece of equipment must be thoroughly investigated from a health and safety perspective before it is purchased.
- There is an opportunity to expand the work of technical services workers in Group 3 and 4, and contract in facility maintenance work in new facilities.
- Increasing the number of retail outlets and expanding their hours, products and services would improve service for the public and lessen the job loss resulting from new equipment and work reorganization in the plants.
- Work that is currently contracted out must be contracted in to protect jobs and improve service.
- Expansion of door-to-door delivery in rural and urban communities would not only improve service but would also reduce job loss from mechanized sequencing.
- *It would be folly to jump headlong into a massive program of mechanized sequencing prior to testing the equipment and the work process. In the past Canada Post has estimated that mechanized sequencing could potentially cut an average of one hour from each letter carrier route.*

Fighting for jobs and services

The union is prepared to fight on behalf of the membership and the public. The National Executive Board (NEB) has put together a committee to handle national consultation. That committee includes the national president, the 4th national vice president and the national directors of the Metro-Toronto, Prairie and Pacific regions. The national union representative for consultation will work with the committee as well as other national directors, union representatives and staff as required.

CUPW will establish consultative committees at all levels of the union and working groups to address all of the specific issues affecting particular groups of postal workers. At every step of the way we will be looking to eliminate all adverse effects, negotiate a share of the benefits, and protect jobs and service.

The union will communicate with the members and the public. We will mobilize the membership, our allies and the public to protect jobs and postal service. We will be visible in the workplace, the community and the media during Canada Post's regional forums.

After decades of excellent service and high profits, we are not going to move backwards. It is time for progress.

What if Canada Post were deregulated?

In 1996, Canada Post Corporation commissioned the consulting firm Coopers Lybrand to examine the implications should the corporation lose its exclusive privilege to handle letters. Coopers Lybrand concluded that the corporation would not be sustainable for any length of time should the 'exclusive privilege' be eliminated.

The Coopers Lybrand study was based on the assumption that the 'exclusive privilege' would be eliminated on April 1, 1997. It rejected the view that the experiences of postal deregulation in Sweden, Finland or Argentina would be applicable in Canada. It assumed that competition would quickly capture significant mail volumes from Canada Post due to 'cream skimming'. The report stated: "Many messenger, admail distributors and other suppliers could quickly organize to deliver pre-scheduled invoices and publications from utilities, municipalities, charities, retailers and financial services sectors. It is safe to assume that there would be a loss of market share in the business-to-business and business-to-household volumes in the high density markets".

Coopers Lybrand predicted that any move such as eliminating the 'exclusive privilege' would almost certainly lead to unprecedented confrontations between government, management and unions. It also projected that 18,000 to 22,000 of Canada Post's employees would lose their jobs by the year 2000 although it might be possible for some of them to transfer to the alternate delivery providers.

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May, she and other management representatives will talk to about 700 randomly selected CUPW members and over 3,000 supervisors and managers about the corporation's views on modernization.

Of course, there are alternatives to management's view of a modernized, deregulated or privatized post office *with* fewer jobs and *without* an exclusive privilege to protect universal postal service.

CUPW will fight to defend public postal service against deregulation and privatization and we will demand that postal workers and the public benefit from modernization. The union has produced a document called *Our Vision of the Post Office*, which makes proposals to ensure the future of public postal service and jobs. You can see highlights below. You can also learn more by attending CUPW events and activities, like alternative forums on the post office in the spring. Watch your local bulletin board to learn about activities you can take part in.

CUPW's Vision for Canada Post

Our public post office delivers. It provides everyone, no matter where they live, with an effective and affordable communication and delivery system. This is no small feat in a huge country with a population spread far and wide.

The post office also provides jobs. And it plays a key role in supporting economic growth by providing the stable infrastructure that communities need to thrive and businesses need to grow.

Unfortunately, Canada Post believes the post office is a business. The corporation has made it clear that it intends to focus on its major customers, not the public — the people who built and paid for our post office.

CUPW doesn't think that the public and postal workers are likely to fare well with a post office that is increasingly focused on commercial goals instead of public interest objectives.

While CUPW recognizes that our post office must adapt to an ever-changing world, we do not support

transforming our public post office into a commercially driven business through privatization and deregulation — the so called Modern Post.

There are other ways of dealing with the challenges our public post office faces in today's world. An outline of our vision is presented below.

CUPW wants a post office that:

- Remains a publicly-owned enterprise, responsible to Parliament and the public
- Adheres to its public service mandate
- Retains the exclusive privilege to collect, transmit and deliver letters
- Provides door-to-door delivery in urban areas
- Provides rural delivery
- Delivers admail
- Offers industry leading parcel and courier services
- Develops new products and services
- Keeps jobs in communities where the work is located
- Maintains post offices in rural and urban communities
- Maximizes the amount of work done “in-house”, and minimizes the “contracting-out” of work
- Provides employees with safe, unionized jobs that have fair wages, and good working conditions
- Shares the benefits of technological change with workers and the public
- Maximizes environmentally friendly practices
- Invests profits and dividend payments in services, health and safety and good jobs

You can contact your local to get a copy of *Our Vision of the Post Office* or check our website at <http://www.publicpostoffice.ca>