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A Half-Century of Operating Independently While Continuing to Bind the Nation Together

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Postal Service marks its 50th anniversary as an independent agency today.

On July 1, 1971, the U.S. Post Office Department became the U.S. Postal Service, a transformation made possible by the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970. This law transformed the Post Office Department from a cabinet level agency to an independent establishment of the executive branch called the United States Postal Service (USPS).

“In the more than two centuries since Benjamin Franklin was appointed our first Postmaster General in 1775, the Postal Service has grown and changed with America, boldly embracing new technologies to better serve a growing population,” said Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer Louis DeJoy. “We stand ready, willing and able to deliver for America into the next half-century and beyond.”

The first day of USPS operations in 1971 was commemorated at Post Offices nationwide with a new postage stamp and a free souvenir envelope. Official ceremonies, open houses, facility tours, refreshments, entertainment and other festivities also marked the day.

The organization’s achievements during the past half-century include the introduction of ZIP+4 Codes (1983), its first website (1994), Forever stamps (2007) and new products and services like Every Door Direct Mail (2011) and Informed Delivery (2017).

This spirit of innovation continues with [Delivering for America](#), the organization’s new 10-year plan, which focuses on restoring service excellence and financial stability to the Postal Service through new efficiencies, products and services, and investments in people, technology and infrastructure.

To mark its 50th anniversary, the Postal Service has published an [oral history](#) of its first 50 years with 25 employees who were part of the organization’s transition from the Post Office Department, as well as a retrospective of [National Postal Service Day](#) in 1971. Explore additional information about the Postal Service’s history at about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-history/welcome.htm

The Postal Service generally 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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