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Kent Hampton's Capitol Report July 26, 2013

JULY 26TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

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*Submitted by
Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Writer*

1st Postmaster General,

Mr. Benjamin Franklin

On this day in 1775, the U.S. postal system is established by the Second [Continental Congress](#), with [Benjamin Franklin](#) as its first postmaster general. Franklin (1706-1790) put in place the foundation for many aspects of today's mail system. During early colonial times in the 1600s, few American colonists needed to send mail to each other; it was more likely that their correspondence was with letter writers in Britain. Mail deliveries from across the Atlantic were sporadic and could take many months to arrive. There were no post offices in the colonies, so mail was typically left at inns and taverns. In 1753, Benjamin Franklin, who had been postmaster of Philadelphia, became one of two joint postmasters general for the colonies. He made numerous improvements to the mail system, including setting up new, more efficient colonial routes and cutting delivery time in half between Philadelphia and [New York](#) by having the weekly mail wagon travel both day and night via relay teams. Franklin also debuted the first rate chart, which standardized delivery costs based on distance and weight. In 1774, the British fired Franklin from his postmaster job because of his revolutionary activities.

However, the following year, he was appointed postmaster general of the United Colonies by the Continental Congress. Franklin held the job until late in 1776, when he was sent to France as a diplomat. He left a vastly improved mail system, with routes from [Florida](#) to [Maine](#) and regular service between the colonies and Britain. President [George Washington](#) appointed Samuel Osgood, a former [Massachusetts](#) congressman, as the first postmaster general of the American nation under the new [U.S. constitution](#) in 1789. At the time, there were approximately 75 post offices in the country.

Today, the [United States](#) has over 40,000 post offices and the postal service delivers 212 billion pieces of mail each year to over 144 million homes and businesses in the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam, the American Virgin Islands and American Samoa. The postal service is the nation's largest civilian employer, with over 700,000 career workers, who handle more than 44 percent of the world's cards and letters. The postal service is a not-for-profit, self-supporting agency that covers its expenses through postage (stamp use in the United States started in 1847) and related products. The postal service gets the mail delivered, rain or shine, using everything from planes to mules. However, it's not cheap: The U.S. Postal Service says that when fuel costs go up by just one penny, its own costs rise by \$8 million.

Citizens and Legislators Working Group on Medicaid Eligibility and Reform will hold a hearing to discuss Missouri's system of Medicaid and will accept public input. The hearing will be held next Wednesday, July 31st at the B.A.I.L.S. center in Kennett from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. If you wish to testify, please contact our office at (573) 751-3629. Your participation is appreciated.

See ya in Church Sunday!!

As always, it is an honor to serve you in the Missouri House. If you would like to discuss any issue, please call 573-751-3629. You can also email me at

kent.hampton@house.mo.gov

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