This month’s focus... Shipping & Mailing

STATION 17 POST OFFICE in the basement of MCN is contract postal unit, staffed by Vanderbilt employees yet offering virtually all the services of any other US post office (passport service is one that is not available). Station 17 sells stamps and money orders, mails domestic and international letters and large envelopes, ships domestic and international parcels. Services at the retail window may be procured by cash, checks with a valid driver’s license, an 1180, or a metered mail slip- we regret to say that no credit or debit cards are accepted. (Note: 1180s are for purchasing stamps only; metered mail slips are used for mailing or shipping charges and are described in detail on the back page.)

WHEN USING USPS SERVICES it is important to remember that shape, weight and distance matter and determine the type of mailing or shipping service and its rate. You may get help using US mail services by visiting www.usps.com. There you may look up a zip code, calculate postage, compare services, print a postage label (purchasing online), locate a post office, track and confirm certain letter and parcel categories to which a tracking service has been added, and more.

Price Increases
New flat rate prices became effective January 18, 2009

Flat Rate Envelopes and Boxes
Priority Mail —
Envelope $4.95
Small box $4.95
Regular box $10.35
Large box $13.95
Large box (APO/FPO) $11.95

Express Mail —
Envelope $17.50

Note: The price change for stamps will be effective on May 11, 2009 with the 1st class letter stamp increasing to 44¢. More information at http://www.usps.com/prices/pricechanges.htm.

News you can use

USPS security guidelines require that all packages over 13 oz. in weight be traceable back to the mailer. This means that parcels of this type may not be placed into the mail stream with only stamps for postage. A meter slip or official rubber-stamp cancellation at the retail window is necessary.

Full mail service at the One Hundred Oaks facility is currently being implemented. Station 17 has a mailroom on-site (no retail counter service) and VUMC personnel will deliver and pick up both US and campus mail from clinics and offices. Rolls and books of stamps will be sold by the One Hundred Oaks Cashier—cash, checks, credit cards and 1180s accepted.
The VUMC meter mail system allows for the quick dispatch of outgoing mail without the purchase of stamps for each item. Mail is sent through one of Station 17’s postage meters, which prints the needed postage on the item and automatically debits the amount to Station 17’s postage account. Meter mail can be sent by two methods: 1) by meter slip (described just below) or 2) meter token (blue dots).

**METER SLIP** - The most common way to send meter mail is with the Metered Mail Service form which may be ordered through Forms Management as MC 4000, in packs of 50. (Older Medical Center slips, with the blue paper top copy, may still be used until supplies are exhausted.) The VUMC meter mail system should not be confused with that of VU which can be found on their website: [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/mailservices/metered.html](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/mailservices/metered.html). The meter slip should be fully filled out and attached to the mail piece or pieces to be sent out; the bundle may then be picked up by your campus mail carrier or placed in the Metered Mail slots in the Post Office Station 17 lobby or at the TVC and VCH mail rooms. In order for the charge to be processed correctly and your mail to be sent without delay, there are three critical points that should be kept in mind when using this form:

1. Form should have BLUE printing on the top copy and the Medical Center logo
2. Fill in budget number(s) completely
3. Sign or get authorized signature in the “approved by” box.

**METER TOKEN** - This is a small, round, blue sticker which can be purchased in sheets of 120, from Station 17 Post Office with an 1180. Each token is always priced the same as a first-class stamp. When one is placed on the reverse side of an envelope, in the bottom center, and sent to Station 17 as meter mail, this is accepted as evidence of postage payment and the letter is metered and sent out. Tokens cannot be used on parcels or any other item that would require more than one first-class stamp to send.

Meter tokens are designed for use by departments that have security concerns about keeping actual stamps on hand. Station 17 meter tokens are not good at any other post office and so have no value except for VUMC business. If you use only small amounts of stamps and/or have a secure place to store your stamp stock, you may prefer stamps as a simpler alternative.

Letters bearing this token MUST BE SENT TO STATION 17 AS METER MAIL. This means, either bundled and picked up by your campus mail carrier, or placed in the meter mail slot in the Station 17 lobby. Such items CANNOT BE SENT DIRECTLY TO THE US POSTAL SERVICE.

For more information about metered mail see: [http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/copypost/metermail.htm](http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/copypost/metermail.htm).

**Address Formatting is the Key**

Today computerized scanners, not human beings, are being used to read and barcode US mail. It is important to use correctly formatted return addresses as well as informing your senders of your correct and complete address to ensure timely receipt of your letters and packages.

This is an example of a correctly formatted US mail address for the 37232 area:

**John Doe**

Vanderbilt Univ. Med. Center

Station 17 Post Office

B-0106 MCN

Nashville, TN 37232-2635

(Note: Any VUMC address using our very own 37232 zip code, should use its campus zip after the zip as a “plus 4” and does not require a street address.)