

Get 4 FREE trial issues >>

Subscribe

Student offers

The
Economist[Log in](#) | [Register](#) | [My account](#) | [Subscribe](#)[Digital & mobile](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [RSS](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Help](#)

Wednesday September 14th 2011

Search

[World politics](#)[Business & finance](#)[Economics](#)[Science & technology](#)[Culture](#)[Blogs](#)[Debate & discuss](#)[Multimedia](#)[Print edition](#)

Comments by kenneth ellman

You've got fail

Sep 14th 2011 11:45 GMT

From Kenneth Ellman, email: ke@kennethellman.com, Phone: 9738968284, Post Office Box 18, Newton, New Jersey 07860. September 14, 2011
Kenneth Ellman on Postal Service, A Constitutional and Practical Necessity.

<https://www.economist.com/users/guest-wnomejl/comments>

Comment on The Economist Article, September 8, 2011, "You Got Fail" and New York Times Article on Postal Deficit on September 4, 2011.

Unlike an email, to hold a written letter from a loved one or from some important event in your life, is not the same as having an email in your computer. It is why we send and give to each other something we can touch and feel and hold and experience. It is why the President awards the Medal of Honor by placing it physically on the neck of the holder and not just a computer note in the computer file of the soldier. Some time ago I sent an email of gratitude to the mother of a well known deceased author whose work I respected. The authors mother sent an email back to me with touching words of tears and thanks. But then I realized it was a printout from my computer as was my message to her. Yes, the words were sent and received but it was not the same as if I had written a letter to her and she to me. There was no signature, no authenticity, no paper. And this fact of difference goes on in each and every human contact that we experience.

The perennially recurring issue of governmental deficits, including that of the Postal Service, has attracted extraordinary interest and comments. Not less important is the role of employer performed by the Post Office and our government generally, for so many middle class citizens and families over so many years, that really has no peer. Sometimes I think that one of the reasons the Postal Service is so targeted for criticism and abuse is not just because as an institution it is everywhere, but because it represents a governmental employment that in many ways treats its employees significantly better than what we call the "private sector". Government employment, when you strip away the justifiable complaints (which can and are also made of any private business), leaves the stark fact that Federal government employment tends to treat its employees better and with more decency than private employment. Yes, of course Federal government employment, does not normally provide the ability to become a multi millionaire with stock options and other business remuneration. But for the vast majority of our citizens, who are not successful millionaire entrepreneurs and tycoons, it gives our nation a reservoir of decent and valuable middle class jobs for decent and valuable people, to build a nation with and keep it safe. We created a "Civil Service System" that offers jobs without discrimination on a merit basis and couples that with a livable wage, job security, health benefits and credo that we used to know by the simple name of "Public Service". There are rude, incompetent, and abusive people in all walks of life, and the Civil Service System or government employment system has its share, including a share of thieves. So what? What it does do is provide an employment vehicle and opportunity for our citizens to try to do some good, "for the public service" and to be afforded a middle class standard of living and job security to build stability in our communities. And this respect for the value of our fellow citizens and for public service is worth something and worth keeping. In return we demand a standard of honesty from our Civil Service and Public employees above that from other walks of life. The Civil Service has a duty to the public and not to a private employer or just to themselves. We expect this from our government service and that is why we are so angry when we do not get it. "Throw the bums out" is one of the expressions we use when public service is corrupted. I do not hear that expression to the private sector, for we cannot throw a private business out (of course we can stop doing business with them). It is hard to believe and remember but sometimes there is more to life than making money and getting rich and paying low wages and building up a privately owned company for the extreme wealth of the few. There is a balance in life and public works between the private purpose and public purpose and we forget this at our peril. We have tried to make the Post Office Department better by making it more structurally like a business enterprise, and for efficiency purposes that is fine and laudable. Our government is "our thing" and Public Service is something we should cherish and protect just as we expect the employees of our government to care for, safeguard and respect our citizens and the institution they work for.

Kenneth Ellman, Post Office Box 18, Newton, New Jersey 07860,
email: ke@kennethellman.com, Phone: 9738968284

[Recommend](#)[Permalink](#)[Report abuse](#)**More from our blogs >>****Products & events****Stay informed today and every day**

Subscribe to *The Economist's* free e-mail newsletters and alerts.

[Get e-mail newsletters](#)

Subscribe to *The Economist's* latest article postings on Twitter

[Follow *The Economist* on Twitter](#)

See a selection of *The Economist's* articles, events, topical videos and debates on Facebook.

[Follow *The Economist* on Facebook](#)

Advertisement

Get 4 FREE trial issues >>

Subscribe

Student offers

The
Economist

Log in | Register | My account | Subscribe

Digital & mobile | Newsletters | RSS | Jobs | Help

Wednesday September 14th 2011

Search



World politics

Business & finance

Economics

Science & technology

Culture

Blogs

Debate & discuss

Multimedia

Print edition

Comments by kenneth ellman

Advertisement

You've got fail

Sep 14th 2011 12:06 GMT

From Kenneth Ellman, email:ke@kennethellman.com, Phone: 9738968284, Post Office Box 18, Newton, New Jersey 07860. September 14, 2011.

Kenneth Ellman on Analysis of Postal Service Issues. Analysis Comment on The Economist Article, September 8, 2011, "You Got Fail"and New York Times Article on Postal Deficit on September 4, 2011.

I now make the following points:

1. The United States Post Office and or United States Postal Service and the Postmaster General are governmental functions specifically authorized by the United States Constitution. The reason for the existence of the Post Office is the same now as it always has been. That is for the United States Government itself to provide a method for communication and delivery for the people of the United States. It is one of the most vital public rights and services performed by the Government. It is a promise by our government to our people that the government itself will always provide a basic method of communication for all the citizens.

2. The Post Office is and does provide a government office in communities across the United States of all sizes and geography. The dispatch of letters is unusually cheap and allows the transmission of paper documents and other envelope contents anywhere in the United States and in most places in the world. Further the various features of Certified and Registered Mail and other offerings create a scheme of protection for the sender and receiver of such communications and letters. At that price there is nothing like it. Nothing that comes close.

3. In addition the employment offered by the United States Post Offices has contributed to the existence of a "middle class" with secure and reasonable employment in decent and safe jobs.

This type of government employment is significant and important for the country.

4. The Post Office, its facilities and the mail dispatched by all our citizens is protected by the Postal Inspection Service and the Postal Police, all law enforcement employees of the United States Government.

5. Whether the Postal Service, which is nothing more than a branch of the United States Government (all fictions laid aside) needs more money or can be managed more efficiently really is a separate question from the fact that it is a part of our government that must always continue to be available to all citizens even if greatly subsidized by our taxes and governmental budget process.

6. Congress must do what is necessary to maintain this vital Constitutional obligation for all citizens everywhere. The availability of mail service in each and every community is part of the nation and a duty of our government to directly offer and make available such communication services.

Stop pretending that profitability matters, it does not. What matters is the rights of all Americans to be able to access cheap and timely communication services, directly provided by our government in the form of Post Offices across our nation. Increase our Postal Services, do not lessen them and do not further injure decent middle class employment opportunities which are already under severe stress for all Americans. When we lay off Postal employees we lay off our middle class government employees which does nothing but injure our country. Does anyone really believe we have no work for them to do?? Remember who we are and the values we must protect if our population is to flourish. Kenneth Ellman, email:ke@kennethellman.com, Box 18, Newton, New Jersey 07860

Copyright 2011, Kenneth Ellman, All Rights Reserved

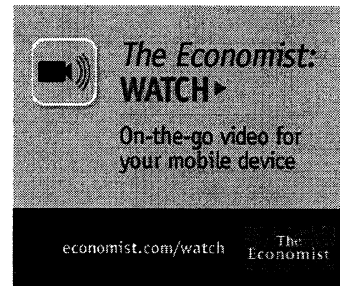
Most commented

Most recommended

1. American public opinion and climate change: No green Tea
2. Charlemagne: Germany's euro question
3. Israel and Turkey: Can it get worse?
4. Charlemagne: Among the dinosaurs
5. Social Security: A monstrous truth
6. Egypt and Israel: A new low
7. China's evolving foreign policy: The Libyan dilemma
8. Global economic dominance: Spheres of influence
9. Obama's jobs speech: A call to action
10. Banyan: Not as easy as ABCD

Over the past five days

Advertisement



The Economist:
WATCH ▶
On-the-go video for
your mobile device

economist.com/watch The Economist