

The North needs better services: postal union

For Immediate Release

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OTTAWA - Postal workers are in Yellowknife today at Canada Post's Annual Public Meeting, bringing a message to the directors of the crown corporation: innovate, expand, and include Northern residents' needs in plans for the postal service's future.

"The North needs better services and Canada Post has a role to play," said Canadian Union of Postal Workers national president Mike Palecek, "The Liberals could deliver more to rural and especially northern communities. Canada Post should move now to restore Canada's postal bank and the Liberal government should move to restore and expand the Food Mail program."

Canada Post's own secret postal banking study declared the idea a "win-win" and "a proven diversification strategy". But postal banking could do more than preserve Canada Post's financial self-sufficiency. Communities across this country need access to financial services. The big banks are still closing branches and abandoning rural Canada. Financial services offered through the post office – the largest retail network in the country – would help support northern local economies. A revived postal bank would be the most accessible bank in the country.

The Harper government ended the Food Mail program and replaced it with Nutrition North, with disastrous consequences. Rather than subsidizing the shipping of healthy food, the new program subsidizes retailers directly, with minimal oversight. An expanded Food Mail program would bring down the high cost of nutritious food in northern communities. Canada Post could deliver food security to the North, as it did in the past.

As well, Canada Post can take on climate change, while building better services, as explained in the union's Delivering Community Power proposal. Also, the postal service needs to incorporate the recommendations of the UN declaration on Indigenous Rights and the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Indigenous ways and needs must be included in a meaningful way.

"Northern communities are on the front line of the climate crisis," said Palecek "Canada Post has a moral responsibility to act. The crown corporation should begin transitioning to carbon-neutral operations, while providing green services to the public."

"Our public postal service is already a lifeline for many living in the North. With a little innovation, it could become a major driver of social and economic development in northern communities."

Canada Post Corporation's annual public meeting in Yellowknife will take place Thursday, September 14 at the Explorer Hotel, 4825 49th Ave. at 11:00 a.m. Mountain Time.

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For more information, contact Farouk Karim, 613-236-3848 or media@cupw-sttp.org.