

# **SendSuite – Sending Savings to Texas**

**2011 Cronin Award Submission**

**Texas Procurement & Support Services Division  
of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts**



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## **Executive Summary**

State government entities are constantly searching for cost reduction strategies to “tighten their belts” and strive to make up budget shortfalls lingering from the nationwide recession. In that spirit, the Texas Procurement and Support Services (TPASS) Division of the Texas State Comptroller’s Office (CPA) constantly evaluates its programs to identify where it can achieve savings and promote efficiency. Moving to a more paperless work environment is one strategy for this, and a prime example is the implementation of the Electronic Return Receipt (ERR) system for certified mail using the Pitney-Bowes SendSuite software. This system eliminates dependence on the “Green Card” for notification of receipt of certified deliveries. Use of the system was proposed as part of a business process reengineering review of the TPASS Division in 2009 and approved for lease and implementation by the Comptroller based on its projected savings in cost and labor.

In 2010, CPA began using SendSuite, the Electronic Return Receipt automated system, to replace the US Postal Service (USPS) Form 3811 Domestic Return Receipt, or “Green Card,” for certified mail. The Send Suite program utilizes a Web-based system, eliminating the need for the Green Card and allowing certified mail senders online access to the status of their mail from sending to receipt or confirmation of non-delivery. The system is comprised of two subsystems, SendSuite and Arrivals, intended to capture all necessary information about the mail piece from sender information to electronic signature upon delivery of the piece.

CPA has taken a novel approach to the use of the SendSuite system by purchasing one license and utilizing that license on behalf of all state agencies for which the Comptroller’s Office meters mail, allowing them to cost share the license rather than purchasing their own, providing a cost-avoidance savings of over a million dollars a year.

Starting with two test agencies, the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation and the Texas Board of Professional Engineers, the Comptroller, assisted by a Pitney-Bowes project manager, installed the system in CPA Statewide Mail Operations and began training the system administrator and testing agencies’ mail managers and users. Staff from both agencies were impressed with the benefits and efficiencies of being able to see the online status of their certified mail pieces rather than having to wait for their Green Cards to trickle in. While some tracking problems occurred with USPS because of lost or undelivered certified pieces, the

ERR system performed as intended. During the testing and subsequent implementation, CPA made recommendations to Pitney-Bowes for software enhancements, including adding a button on the administrator's page to request an email notification upon delivery to aid the users in tracking mail pieces and a message box on the user log-in page to permit the system administrator to provide users information about system updates and conditions. This message box is also used to remind users of procedural tips.

The Comptroller recently recognized its one year anniversary of implementation of the ERR system. Currently 32 agencies have 630 state employee users regularly sending certified mail using the system, with others scheduled for registration and training. Texas is the only Pitney-Bowes customer employing ERR as an enterprise system and looks forward to registering even more state agencies and universities to achieve additional savings for accountable mail.

While SendSuite and similar systems have been in use for some time in the commercial world, the novel use and ongoing enhancements to the CPA system and cost savings make it worthy of showcasing and adaptation by other government organizations.

### **Innovation**

All Texas state agencies and public universities in the greater Travis County area using TPASS mail metering services are encouraged to use the system through the TPASS/Pitney-Bowes license. Instead of individual state agencies acquiring individual licenses with Pitney-Bowes at an approximate cost of \$46,000 annually per agency, they may participate in the TPASS license, sharing a fraction of the annual license fee and leveraging the savings generated by the program for each piece of certified mail sent. Copies of delivery confirmation may be stored electronically or printed for court documentation or other records management purposes.

Initially, there was some resistance to using the system because it was a vast departure from the longtime practice of receiving a piece of paper. Additionally, it was thought that more pieces were being lost in the USPS system because they were being tracked electronically. However, a survey by Pitney-Bowes revealed that the rate of not getting signatures is about same as when using green cards, and tracking deliveries is much easier with the Web-based system.

### **Transferability**

The concept of aggregating a license or lease among agencies is both practical and cost effective. Any state service that may be performed by a single agency on behalf of several agencies has the potential for achieving considerable cost savings and flexibility of use.

The SendSuite system possesses the robustness to accommodate any size organization and number of users and has the capability to designate multiple tiers of users.

### **Service Improvement**

The user logs on to an individual SendSuite account on the SendSuite Desktop, completes an online shipping label with sender and recipient information and receives a confirmation which may be printed or saved. TPASS Statewide Mail Operations collects the certified mail pieces, scans them into SendSuite, meters them and delivers them to the United States Postal Service. From receipt and scanning by TPASS, the piece may be tracked by the user through SendSuite. The user may view the recipient's electronic signature and print a copy if needed. It is no longer necessary to wait for the return of the "Green Card," which may not be returned to the sender for several days after the mail piece is delivered.

A copy of the scanned recipient page with signature is found at Attachment B.

With the enthusiastic assistance of its users and the continued support of Pitney Bowes, CPA continues to make enhancements to the system to provide even greater efficiencies. The CPA Arrivals system is used to track receipt and delivery of other accountable mail, including mail from FedEx, UPS, LoneStar and other ground carriers en route to state agencies. It also has the ability to track certified mail from shipment to delivery with electronic notification of receipt.

### **Cost Reduction**

The projected cost savings for SendSuite was \$40,000 leading to an actual savings of \$73,000 by the end of fiscal year. In that respect, the SendSuite project produced a higher rate of savings than it was originally projected reflecting \$1.15 savings per mail piece.

The fee for the ERR license is paid by the Comptroller and distributed among state agencies. The cost for the first ounce of a certified mail piece when using ERR is \$1.15 less than when using the paper Green Card. The Comptroller assesses the sending agency 60 cents of that savings which goes toward the quarterly license

invoice and still saves an agency 55 cents or more per piece, depending on the weight of the item.

As of June 2011, with 32 state agencies participating and over 60,000 pieces of mail handled under this system, the state achieved a total savings of over \$73,000. Additionally, Texas agencies realized a cost avoidance of \$1.17 million by not acquiring individual leases for ERR.

### **Attachment A**

#### **Cost Savings Summary**

Number of Participating Agencies as of June 2011	Cost per Agency for Individual Annual License	Cost Per Agency for Lease Use	Minimum Savings per Piece	Total Savings as of June 2011
32	\$46,000/yr	<\$500/yr	\$1.15	\$73,069

## Attachment B

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### STATE OF TEXAS

The following is the delivery information for Certified Mail™ item number 7108 2133 3938 2190 0202. Our records indicate that this item was delivered on 03/01/2011 at 11:40 a.m. in NORTH CHARLESTON, SC, 29405. The scanned image of the recipient information is provided below.

Signature of Recipient:

  
ERIC R COMBS

Address of Recipient:

PO BOX 70904

Thank you for selecting the Postal Service for your mailing needs. If you require additional assistance, please contact your local post office or Postal Service representative.

Sincerely,

United States Postal Service

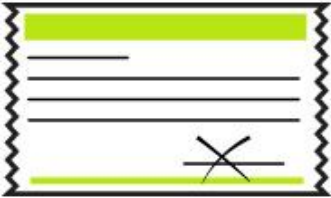
The customer reference number shown below is not validated or endorsed by the United States Postal Service. It is solely for customer use.

Customer Reference Number: 7900000188060

<http://fbtx.g1.com/equest/temp/9171082133393821900202.ins>

6/22/2011

\$2.30 per 1 oz piece



**VS.** \$1.15 per 1 oz piece

