

Monopolies Don't Listen

... and monopolies can't last without government protecting them from competition.

The only reason anyone still puts up with the US Post Office is because of ridiculous "laws" forbidding anyone from competing with them in "first class" mail delivery. This government-mandated monopoly offers poor, and sometimes surly, service.

Around here, one thing they *don't* offer is home delivery. If we get mail, it will be addressed to a PO Box. However, more and more companies refuse to accept a PO Box as an address, insisting on a street address. For "security"- never mind that I have explained to them that actually having a chance of getting my mail is more secure than not getting it, and if I am to get it, it WILL be through a PO Box. Period. No matter how many times you explain it, they insist.

The old postmaster had her faults, but at least she would put mail with a street address in the PO Box. The new postmaster throws a hissy fit and has issued warnings that mail addressed to a street address will be returned to sender.

Last week I was standing in line to pick up a package when he started lecturing the guy at the counter about the lack of a PO Box on the box he was handing over - warning him that starting soon, such packages would be returned to sender as "undeliverable".

The "customer" explained how some companies won't accept a PO Box. Postmaster smugly said "They'll accept it."

The next woman in line spoke up and said "No, they won't."

Postmaster: "They'll accept it."

The woman in line behind her said "No, some websites will reject the address if it has a PO Box in it."

The postmaster repeated "They'll accept it."

I was beginning to hate the guy by this point, but I didn't say anything. I've run into the same problems. But, I have found a solution.

What has worked for me so far is putting the "required" street address in the first address field, and putting the box number in the second, without "PO" in front of it. "Box 123" for example, rather than "PO Box 123". So far this has satisfied both the shippers and the post office.

Well, a couple of days ago there was a note from the post office in every box (and a bunch of them laying on the counter and in the trash can) telling people to do basically what I had already discovered, but with one mistake: it said to include "PO Box 123". I know from experience that won't work as often. If "PO" is *anywhere* in the address, it will sometimes be rejected. But it was amusing to see the postmaster *kind of* admitting he had been lying.

So, I took one of the discarded notes and wrote my own note on it with the better information. We'll see if he spreads the news, or if he'll have to backtrack again due to giving his "customers" more bad information.

Government monopolies are NEVER a good thing.