

Recent Highlights & Achievements

The following achievements were made possible due to member support. A number of these are ongoing...

Catalog Postage Rates & Postal System Improvements

- Direct and aggressive work with USPS officials led to the unprecedented “undoing” of the 2015 flats sequencing system (FSS) rate structure, effective January 2017. This enables catalogers to claim the rate for the distribution density their books qualify for, regardless of whether they’re in an FSS zone or not. It removes the FSS premium causing catalogers to selectively divert mail from FSS whenever possible, a pricing signal in complete opposition to postal management’s stated goal to get flats to the front of the FSS, ready to run.
- Also effective in January 2017, ACMA helped propel an increase in the weight break point for Standard Mail flats from 3.3 ounces to 4.0 ounces, thereby enabling added “free” page counts or increased basis weight and thicker paper in catalogs. Both could increase response rates or average order value.
- Through relentless appeals to USPS management to help kick start renewed growth of catalog mail volume, ACMA and USPS initiated a “Growth For Both” workgroup. Chief among these efforts has been a catalog volume-based incentive expected soon.
- The US Postal Service and the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) have come to rely on ACMA’s catalog-specific input on postal pricing, regulation and delivery, including insuring that rate structures are sound and favorable to the catalog industry. Also ongoing is work to educate policymakers on the value of catalogs in the mail and catalog business model.
- Effectively gained indefinite “stay of execution” after the PRC’s previous finding of noncompliance of Standard Mail Flats that would have forced catalog postage rates higher, while working with the USPS to reduce flats costs to bring flat mail back into compliance (ongoing).
- Challenged exigency rate filing before regulator resulting in limited exigency rate period and required roll-back. Participated in US Court of Appeals suit challenging this limitation. Catalogers gained at least 4 additional months of no rate increase in 2015 due to this litigation.

Postal Reform Work

- Aggressive lobbying for postal reform legislation to address USPS finances, cost structure, innovation and the returning of congressional overcharges to postal rate payers.
- Further aggressive work to ensure that any reform package not contain Congressionally-mandated postage increases for catalog mailers.

Remote Sales Tax

- Successfully slowed momentum of anti-*Quill v. North Dakota* forces while pushing for reasonable, business friendly changes to any eventual solution to the internet sales tax issue. As a co-founder of TruST, the True Simplification of Taxation Coalition, helped defeat disastrous proposals by big box retailers (and Amazon) that would undermine cataloging.
- Spurred TruST’s actions to challenge unconstitutional regulations in several states in 2016-17 (ongoing); most of which would require most remote marketers to collect sales taxes from in-state consumers even if the marketer has no physical presence in those states.
- Testified, advocated and now suing states pushing illegal nexus laws in contravention to *Quill* precedent.
- Heavily promoted minimum simplifications and true fairness needed for *Quill* to be legislatively overturned, keeping the disastrous Marketplace Fairness Act (Senate) and Remote Transactions Parity Act (House) from becoming law: “David” beat the “MFA Goliaths.”
- Spearheaded successful letter-writing campaigns to demonstrate crucial support for ACMA / TruST positions.

Catalog Industry Advocacy & Education

- Through effective lobbying and publicity, raised the profile of catalogs both in Washington and nationally; ACMA continues to educate policy makers and the public about the benefits catalogs bring to America.
- Groundbreaking surveys of catalog industry metrics to improve fact-based discussions with policy makers.
- Published periodic member reports on policy, postal and legal developments that will affect members. Our catalog-focused “Legal Corner” has become a valued, must read bulletin, among other valuable member benefits.