

Chico State's Print & Mail Evolution *Becoming a Certified Mail Service Provider*

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How two separate departments came together to become a one-stop, certified full-service operation.

Print + Mail California State University Chico

Name: Print & Mail Services Department
Location: California State University, Chico
Type of Work: High Speed Digital Printing: 80% BW, 20% Color. Full Mailing Services.
Employees Served: 2300 Faculty & Staff
Sustainability: FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) Chain of Custody Certification since 2008

California State University, Chico (also known as Chico State) has a rich history that dates to 1887. In 1972, the University was officially established in the CSU system and now offers over 100 undergraduate majors with a total enrollment of over 17,500 students.

To service the printing and mailing needs of such an organization, the University has a seven-person, full-service operation known as Print and Mail Services. Formally two separate departments, Print and Mail combined operations to

maximize their efficiency and become a one-stop shop for the entire University. All departments and administrative staff now conveniently submit their black-and-white or full-color orders to be printed and processed for a complete range of mailing services, without ever having to leave their offices.

The Evolution

In addition to transitioning to a single full-service entity, Print and Mail evolved in other ways, too. First, it transformed into a digital print shop, slowly

replacing older offset equipment with digital machines that provide a wider variety of services more efficiently and with faster turnaround times.

Second, it achieved something that has made the operation unique among college In-plant mail and print services. Chico State is the first (and to this date, the only) university in the nation to be a **Mail Service Provider (MSP)** certified by the United States Postal Service (USPS). This certification is awarded to those who meet established USPS quality standards, with annual audits to ensure standards are being maintained. In exchange, Print and Mail enjoys greater postal discounts from USPS for its mailings, a reward for the “work-sharing” aspect of validating addresses for greater delivery rates, presorting mailings, and preparing and submitting postal documentation electronically to the post office. The postal savings are passed along to the University departments that use its print and mail services.

As a longtime customer of SmartSoft’s mailing and address verification software, Chico State has been using the all-in-one postal software solution SmartAddresser throughout the process of becoming an MSP. The software is both CASS (Coding Accuracy Support System) and PAVE (Presort Accuracy, Validation, and Evaluation) certified by USPS. SmartAddresser not only

Chico State is the first (and to this date, the only) university in the nation to be a Mail Service Provider (MSP) certified by the United States Postal Service.

provides address correction and postal presorting capabilities, it also offers features such as NCOALink, custom dupe detection, merge/purge, intelligent casing, and a wealth of other list management tools.

According to Chris Mendoza, mail services supervisor for Print and Mail, his office used SmartAddresser throughout the MSP certification

process. His part of the transition consisted of TEM Testing and Mail.dat implementation.

“Both the design of the software and the support staff at SmartSoft led to this being a simple process. The instructions provided by SmartSoft, specifically the By/For documentation, makes it easy for us to meet the established error thresholds set by USPS. Meeting these thresholds is actually dependent on the user’s ability to understand the rules and regulations for By/For per USPS and input the data in the correct fields in the software. The instructions are easy to follow to accomplish this.”



Chris Mendoza, Mail Services Supervisor

Chris had also noted that the same can be said for percent STID Errors because it relies on the user’s ability to understand the USPS regulations and input the data in the correct fields. “Without the clear instructions from SmartSoft, changing this information (when needed) to meet the thresholds would not occur, causing a failure to meet the percentage threshold. Looking at the other threshold requirements, they are dependent on how the software was designed. Taking care of the barcode uniqueness at the piece, container, handling unit levels etc., all just works perfectly, making our lives so much easier,” he said.

The New Age of Efficiency

Kathleen Huber, a customer service representative for Print and Mail, uses the software almost on a daily basis. “I process the mailing lists and do the actual work within SmartAddresser, and I couldn’t be happier with the support I get from SmartSoft,” she said. “If I email a question over, I can send samples of what is happening and I always get a response back

quickly. I then tag the emails for future reference,” she said.

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The team has been thankful for how the process has become standardized noting that the most helpful feature of SmartAddresser is the NCOA updates, because it helps ensure customers with at least 99 percent accuracy.

“University departments that invest in print and mail want the process to be as accurate as possible. SmartAddresser helps me achieve that,” Huber said. Mendoza also highlighted one other benefit of using the software.

“By using SmartAddresser for our full-service mailings—and consistently performing above the required thresholds—we have been able to take advantage of the deferred permit fee payment program offered and avoid the annual fees,” he said. “However, the greatest benefit of your software, in my opinion, is that it has proven to just work and allowed us to achieve our goals. We can’t ask for more than that.”



California State University, Chico processes roughly 250,000 pieces of bulk mail per year.

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