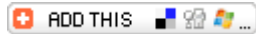




USPS spends tax dollars 'like Monopoly money'

Jim Brown - OneNewsNow - 12/23/2009 7:00:00 AM



Although the United States Postal Service (USPS) expects to lose \$8 billion this year, some of its employees are "living high on the hog in the midst of a recession," all at taxpayers' expense.

President Obama said Monday that American needs a government that is more efficient, effective, and fiscally responsible. "We can't continue to spend as if deficits don't have consequences, as if waste doesn't matter, as if the hard-earned tax dollars of the American people can be treated like Monopoly money," he said. "That's what we've seen time and time again."

One government agency the president may be referring to is the United States Postal Service. An audit by the USPS inspector general recently found \$800,000 in unjustified and "imprudent" purchases over a five-month period.

The audit found that at a September 2008 sales conference, one dinner for 650 Postal employees cost roughly \$62,714, or about \$96 a guest. Another two-day meeting in September of '08 that cost \$27,567 included a per-dinner cost of \$93, and employees were given free lodging "even though their official duty station was within nine miles of the conference facility."

According to the audit, two districts purchased nearly \$15,000 in movie tickets and another bought 30 retirement watches, costing \$216 apiece.



DeHaven

"We're not forced to buy the products or use the services of a private company. [But] with the United States Postal Service, they have a government-granted monopoly over first-class mail -- we don't have a choice," notes Tad DeHaven, a budget analyst at the [Cato Institute](#). "So it's very insulting to [those of] us who are forced to pay for the United States Postal Service's service when they're out there living high on the hog in the midst of a recession."

DeHaven says the report from the USPS audit is just another reason why "it's time to put an end to the government mail monopoly."



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