

NEWS



Elizabeth Beltran and Mel Jacob both of Oceanside, are the creative minds behind FreeGasHelp.com, a promotion and advertising company they started to help drive traffic for their eBay company, 4AuctionHelp.com, an eBay drop-off store in Oceanside. Sean DuFrene | sean@tlnnews.net

Driving ad traffic

Oceanside company exchanges free gas for vehicle ad space

By Heather Chambers
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OCEANSIDE — For the past three months, Vista resident Tim Kataras, 54, has been driving across town with a decal on the rear window of his minivan advertising air purification systems.

Kataras is sitting pretty. He's cut his gas bills by a third advertising for a company he doesn't work for.

Kataras, a sales representative for a consumer electronics business, is part of an alternative advertising strategy that rewards drivers who accumulate 1,000 miles a month or more with free gas cards in exchange for advertisements placed on their vehicles.

FreeGasHelp.com, an Oceanside-based advertisement and promotion company, initiated the idea as a way to gain additional exposure for its eBay drop-off company, 4Auction-Help.com.

"It's almost like an adopt-a-child," said Mel Jacob, managing principal of FreeGasHelp.com. "We profile how many miles they drive, where they

live and the cosmetic condition of their car."

The idea to connect advertisers with drivers isn't new, but companies are beginning to see the value of alternative advertisements placed in highly trafficked areas.

"We said, 'Hey, thousands and thousands of people see vehicles on the roads, maybe this is a good way to get out there,'" said Gary Krymer, vice president and co-owner of Laser Source, a Vista-based printer repair and supply company that signed up for the program.

Krymer said he's always searching for a means of company exposure for the business, which relies heavily on repeat business and referrals.

Laser Source runs advertisements in the Yellow Pages, uses direct mailing and displays its information on company vehicles.

"It's worked OK," Krymer said.

Jacob estimated advertisements on two company vans increased business for the eBay drop-off by as much as 30 percent.

"The name is brought up all of a sudden with your neighbors. Your circle of influence also brings up the word of that company," Jacob said.

Drivers are often asked if they work for the advertised company, he said, prompting further

explanation about the program and the advertiser.

For drivers, participation can cut their gas costs significantly — with an additional 5 percent incentive for hybrid vehicles, bright yellow vehicles and vehicles made in 2000 or later. Military members and pizza delivery employees are also given an additional 5 percent bonus.

Depending on the type of advertisement, drivers can make between \$5 and \$200 a month displaying advertisements for mortgage companies, real estate agencies and car dealerships. Drivers cash in more a month for side rear window decals (\$50) and displays that fill a window (\$80) than bumper stickers (\$5) and door magnets (\$30).

"I'm not one to be a 'you are what you drive' kind of person," said Kataras, who drives his Toyota Sienna more than 2,000 miles a month. He estimated he uses 100 gallons of gas a month.

"As an individual, there's nothing you can do about the price of gas," Kataras said. "This is about the only thing you can do so it doesn't sting so much."

For information, visit www.freegashelp.com, or call 1-888-88GASAD (1-888-884-2723).

Reach reporter Heather Chambers at 760.752.6745.

Postage increase effective Sunday

By Heather Anderson
Special to Today's Local News

VISTA — U.S. postage rates will increase Sunday for the first time since 2002. Most rates and fees will increase by approximately 5.4 percent, resulting in a 2-cent hike to 39 cents for first-class letters.

According to a release by the U.S. Postal Service, the rate hike is not the result of increased fuel or labor costs or a lack of federal funding. Instead the increase fulfills requirements set in a 2003 federal law. That law requires the postal service to establish a \$3.1 billion escrow account Congress has yet to determine how those funds will be used.

Postal customers with outdated 37-cent stamps may purchase 2-cent stamps to make up the difference. The postal service has reissued a

2-cent stamp, which features a Navajo necklace.

Maribel Franco, manager of the Postal Annex in Vista, located at 3231-C Business Park Drive, said customers began requesting 2-cent stamps last week.

"When people ask for a roll of stamps, I tell them that the rate is going to change Sunday, so they either buy the new ones, or say 'I'll just use these before Sunday,'" she said.

Franco's Postal Annex location has the Lady Liberty and Love True Blue designs of the new 39-cent stamps in stock. Shipping rates and the cost of fees and services also will increase.

The cost to mail an item weighing up to half a pound via Express Mail, the postal service's fastest delivery method, will rise to \$14.40 from \$13.65. Priority Mail, which delivers packages in an average of two to three days, will cost \$4.05 for packages up to one pound, up from \$3.85.

Certified letters will rise to \$2.40, an increase of 10 cents.



BRIEFS

CitiFinancial signs Carlsbad lease

CARLSBAD — CitiFinancial Services signed a five-year lease on 1,200 square feet at 2624 El Camino Real in Carlsbad, according to CB Richard Ellis. The lease is valued at \$203,642.

CitiFinancial is a member of Citigroup, the world's largest financial services provider. With more than 2,000 offices in the U.S. and Canada, CitiFinancial provides home improvement loans, bill consolidation loans, and money for tuition, vacation getaways and unexpected expenses.

— Heather Chambers

VU Games purchases High Moon Studios

CARLSBAD — Vivendi Universal Games announced Friday that it completed the purchase of High Moon Studios, an independent game developer based in Carlsbad.

VU Games said it will retain High Moon's team of development professionals, as well as rights to the studio's intellectual properties. John Rowe, High Moon's president and chief executive officer, will continue to manage the studio.

— City News Service

Local homesales

Following is a list of single-family homes sold in selected ZIP codes between Dec. 21 and Dec. 28. Source: First American Real Estate Solutions

Address	Area	Price
Carlsbad 92008		
5059 Ciardi Ct		\$779,000
Carlsbad 92009		
6837 Camino De Amigos	2013	\$620,000
2946 Levante St	2098	\$635,000
Escondido 92025		
3335 Jasmine Pl	2767	\$700,000
1109 5th Ave	1621	\$595,000
1606 Summit Ln	3994	\$990,000
Escondido 92026		
2053 Camino Dr	1507	\$459,000
2340 Viewridge Pl	1964	\$520,000
2143 Amorosa Gln	1070	\$425,000
Escondido 92027		
1960 Oak Hill Dr	1524	\$509,000
Oceanside 92054		
1439 Dubuque St	1804	\$550,000
Oceanside 92056		
4926 Colusa Dr	3046	\$500,000
3939 Bedford Ave	1706	\$538,000
Oceanside 92057		
4462 Avenida Del Gado	827	\$360,000
4920 Verde Dr	1196	\$433,000
4495 Goldfinch Way	1436	\$492,000
286 Flame Tree Pl	1100	\$434,000
4240 Milano Way	1921	\$525,000
San Marcos 92069		
1724 Corte Manolito	1880	\$580,000
1750 Curry Comb Dr	1517	\$450,000
2469 Twin Oaks Valley Rd	1342	\$722,000
738 Banyan Ct	2520	\$765,000
738 Banyan Ct	2520	\$765,000
San Marcos 92078		
644 Discovery St		\$243,500
Vista 92081		
1609 Olympus Loop Dr	2003	\$530,000
852 Crest View Rd	1448	\$470,000
649 California Oaks Dr	3207	\$1,050,000
Vista 92083		
377 Rancho Vista Pl	1390	\$475,000
1170 Phillips St	1560	\$520,000
612 Tatam St	768	\$410,000
Vista 92084		
1055 Lindy Ln	1776	\$566,000
436 Avalon Dr	1096	\$449,000
1412 Chestnut Ln	2228	\$670,000

Rate Changes

	Current	Sunday
First-class letter (1 oz.)	\$0.37	\$0.39
First-class letter (2 oz.)	\$0.60	\$0.63
Postcard	\$0.23	\$0.24
Priority Mail (1 lb.)	\$3.85	\$4.05
Express Mail (1/2 lb.)	\$13.65	\$14.40
Express Mail (2 lbs.)	\$17.85	\$18.80

Fee and Service Changes

	Current	Sunday
Certified Mail	\$2.30	\$2.40
Delivery Confirmation (Priority)	\$0.45	\$0.50
Delivery Confirmation (First Class Parcels)	\$0.55	\$0.60
Return Receipt (Original Signature)	\$1.75	\$1.85
Return Receipt (Electronic)	\$1.30	\$1.35
Money Orders (up to \$500)	\$0.90	\$0.95

STOCK EXCHANGE HIGHLIGHTS

NYSE	8,031.66	+87.60
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AMEX	1,804.46	+22.84
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GAINERS (\$2 OR MORE)

Name	Last	Chg	%Chg
Telcel	9.30	+1.50	+19.2
Laidlaw	25.50	+3.00	+13.3
Salesforce	39.85	+3.79	+10.5
UniFirst	33.86	+2.84	+8.2
Telcel	5.07	+0.41	+8.8
WolvTub	6.12	+0.49	+8.7
Ashland n	64.11	+5.05	+8.6
SadiaSA s	32.94	+2.60	+8.6
StarGas	2.27	+0.18	+8.6
Theragen	3.63	+0.28	+8.4

MOST ACTIVE (\$1 OR MORE)

Name	Vol (00)	Last	Chg
SPDR	554459	128.44	+1.06
ShRS2000	23127369	61	+8.2
SemiHTr	194085	39.65	+6.9
SP Emgy	177694	53.46	+1.28
BernaGold	115806	3.40	+0.20
DJIA Diam	84823	109.52	+6.4
SP FncI	76343	32.47	+1.9
Channell	74940	140.00	+4.50
Crystallg	57939	2.47	+0.08
ISh EAFE s	49946	62.45	+8.3

LOSERS (\$2 OR MORE)

Name	Last	Chg	%Chg
GTATPc	29.31	-2.92	-9.1
ImpacMtg	9.34	-0.80	-7.9
CDI	462150	-1.86	-7.0
SptAuth	29.69	-1.81	-5.7
CopaHold n	25.18	-1.32	-5.0
KCSop	22.00	-1.00	-4.3
Megell	13.33	-0.56	-4.0
NHWKq	3.85	-0.16	-4.0
DelPne	22.72	-0.93	-3.9
TempurP	11.73	-0.41	-3.4

DIARY

Advanced	680
Declined	294
Unchanged	72
Total Issues	1,046
New Highs	132
New Lows	6

MOST ACTIVE (\$1 OR MORE)

Name	Vol (00)	Last	Chg
ENIC Cp	561483	13.73	-2.5
VerizonCm	478818	31.35	+1.3
Lucent	462150	2.77	...
NortelNet	409155	3.40	+1.0
FordM	396670	8.52	+1.7
QwestCm	342088	5.41	+2.2
Pfizer	282618	24.85	+2.7
Motorola	259976	24.34	+8.2
ISHJapan	255647	14.19	+2.1
GenElec	220552	35.47	+2.4

MOST ACTIVE (\$1 OR MORE)

Name	Vol (00)	Last	Chg
Cisco	1134617	18.77	+4.2
Nasdi100T	1063837	742.68	+7.6
Microsoft	960593	26.91	-0.8
SunMicro	922797	4.71	+0.2
Oracle	879107	13.12	+3.3
Intel	442406	26.31	+0.4
SiriusS	416451	6.54	+1.5
MCI Inc s	413179	20.65	-0.6
JDS Uniph	326137	2.66	+0.8
DellInc	306494	30.64	-1.1

DIARY

Advanced	2,019
Declined	1,036
Unchanged	156
Total Issues	3,211
New Highs	206
New Lows	19

STOCKS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Name	Ex	Div	Yld	PE	Last	Daily Chg	YTD %Chg
ApolloG g	Amex	...	...	...	34	+0.6	+11.7
AppleC s	Nasd	...	...	...	49	76.30	+1.92
ApplMtl	Nasd	12	6.27	19.37	6.7	+0.7	+8.0
AMCC	Nasd	...	...	...	2.85	...	+10.9
Ashwrth	Nasd	...	...	...	8.56	+0.6	+13.1
Avanex	Nasd	...	...	...	99	-20	-27.7
AvanirPh	Amex	...	...	...	3.86	-1.4	-12.2
BernaGold	Nasd	...	...	...	3.40	+2.0	+16.8
BestBuy s	NY	32	7.22	47.05	+3.55	+8.2	...
BiogenIdc	Nasd	...	...	...	47.18	+0.6	+4.2
Brdcom	Nasd	...	...	...	67	52.41	+2.30
CallGolf	NY	28	1.9	...	14.50	+2.0	+4.8
Channell	Nasd	...	...	...	33	4.90	-0.5
CienaCp	Nasd	...	...	...	3.36	+2.1	+13.1
Cisco	Nasd	...	...	...	22	18.77	+4.2
Citigrp	NY	1.76	3.6	11	46.82	...	+2
Colu	Nasd	24	1.0	23	24.50	+1.6	+7.1
CmtyBcp	Nasd	40	1.1	37	12	13	+4.6
Crystallg	Amex	...	...	...	2.47	+0.8	+14.4
Cymer	Nasd	...	...	...	36	38.88	+6.3
DJIA Diam	Amex	2.24	2.0	...	109.52	+6.4	+2.4
DellInc	Nasd	...	...	...	24	30.64	+1.1
DesertSns	Amex	...	...	...	3.33	+5.4	+34.8
DotHill	Nasd	...	...	...	44	70.3	+2.5
eBay s	Nasd	...	...	...	64	46.65	+7.7
EMC Cp	NY	...	...	...	26	13.73	-2.5
EagleBond	Amex	...	...	...	12	+0.3	+33.3
ExxonMbl	NY	1.16	2.0	11	59.43	+1.15	+5.8
FordM	NY	40	4.7	9	8.52	+1.7	+10.4
GenProbe	Nasd	...	...	...	47	49.50	-2.2
GenElec	NY	1.00	2.8	20	35.47	+2.4	+7.1
GenMotr	NY	2.00	9.6	...	20.80	+2.8	+12.1
GeoGlobal	Amex	...	...	...	10.80	-3.42	-17.0
GoldStR g	Amex	...	...	...	2.96	-0.2	-12.1
Google	Nasd	...					