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Proposed postal increase will hike first class rates

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The Postal Board of Governors has endorsed a proposed 3- to 5-cent increase in the cost of mailing a first class letter starting in early 1981, sources said Monday.

Postmaster General William Bolger announced details of the proposed across-the-board postage rate package, hammered out during an all-day board meeting Sunday.

The exact increase was not immediately known, but sources said if current budget trends continue, the service would likely need to raise first class rates from the current 15 cents to at least 19 cents to avoid a financial crunch.

Report outlines kids' health needs

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The U.S. National Commission on the International Year of the Child says federal food programs provide only the barest subsistence needs of the poor, and more than 17 million American children live in "debilitating poverty."

The commission, headed by Jean C. Young, wife of former U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young, presented a report to President Carter Monday that outlines many areas of inadequacy in the health care, education, housing, juvenile justice and nourishment of America's children.

Among its findings, the commission reported:

- One million youth are victims of child abuse and neglect.
- Ten million children — one out of seven — have no regular source of medical care; 20 million children under the age of 17 — one out of every three — have never seen a dentist.
- Thirteen percent of all 17-year-olds in school are functionally illiterate.

Postal Rate Commission, the increase would mark the first jump in first class postal rates since May 29, 1978, when the price of a first class stamp for a one-ounce envelope rose from 13 cents to 15 cents.

Sources said current rough projections point to a \$2.4 billion budget deficit for the Postal Service in fiscal 1981 if first-class mail rates remain at 15 cents.

The Postal Rate Commission is expected to take eight to nine months to review the proposal for new rate hikes.

The Postal Service is likely to hold off the effective date for its proposed increase until early 1981, after the Christmas season which is the most profitable time of year for the mail service.

Besides seeking an increase in the

price of first-class stamps, Bolger is reportedly seeking to overhaul parcel post rates to give the Postal Service a new competitive edge against private firms, mainly the United Parcel Service.

One source said that even if the price of first class stamp is raised to 19 cents as early as next January, the Postal Service still would face a projected \$200,000 deficit for fiscal 1981, which begins in October.

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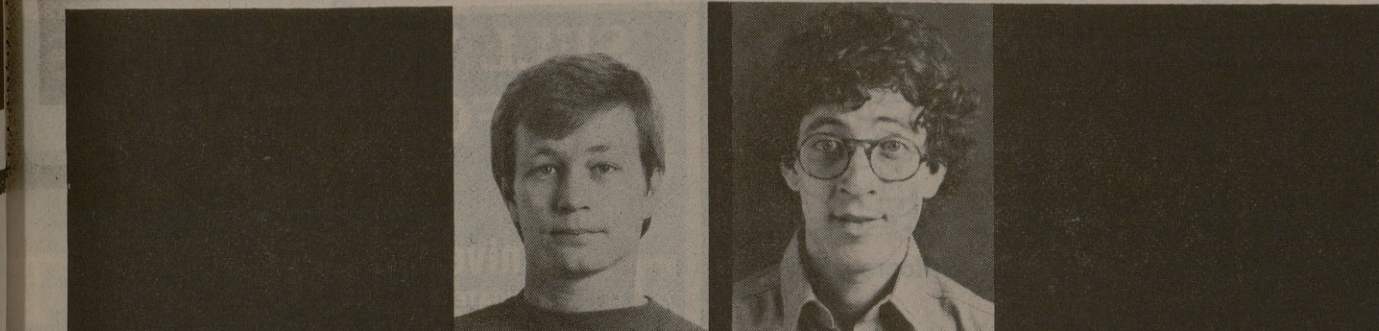
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