

POSTAL NEWS

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1. Postal union: Curbside delivery might eliminate jobs

By John Henderson
Rocky Mount Telegram

Saturday, July 04, 2009

Postal union officials said Thursday that they are concerned that local carrier's jobs might be eliminated if curbside delivery inside the city limits comes to fruition.

Their comments come in the wake of a "final notice" recently sent out to Edgecombe County residents by a carrier who ordered them to install curbside boxes "so there will be no delay in your mail's delivery to your home."

Dave Bellware, president of Branch 1321 of the National Association of Letter Carriers representing those working Rocky Mount, said the carrier violated postal service regulations by demanding the curbside boxes.

"The issue is whether or not the post office is allowed to do it (mandate curbside delivery)," he said. "They are not."

The union's June newsletter stated that "this action by this carrier is short-sighted, clearly violates postal regulations and is just plain stupid."

It also states that the union would defend the carrier who sent out the letter if necessary should management implement disciplinary action against him.

Bellware said curbside delivery can be completed quicker than a route in which the carriers park their truck and walk the route. "If everybody went curbside (delivery), there would be less routes, less employees, less jobs," he said. "The union is doing the best we can to protect jobs."

Carl Walton, a postal service spokesman, said Thursday that he does not anticipate any carriers losing their jobs if city curbside service was implemented.

“I don’t see how that would happen,” he said. “We’re being affected by a loss of mail volume as it is, but we’re not losing carrier jobs. If anything, we may be moving routes around, and in some cases, combining routes so each carrier has a good eight hours.”

He said after employees retire there may be opportunities to combine some routes rather than hiring new carriers.

Walton said the post office is not demanding that customers install the curbside boxes.

“We are asking customers to do it because it makes it (delivery) simpler for us. We can get through routes quicker and more accurately,” he said. “But it’s not a mandate because some people are not able to do it. For us to step forward and make it a rule would not be fair to customers.”

Rocky Mount residents will continue to have their mail delivered to their homes even if they don’t invest in curbside mailboxes, Postmaster Julius Jones said Tuesday.

He said the letter sent out by the carrier, which he did not sign off on, miscommunicated the situation.

“It (curbside service) would help us out as an organization,” Jones said. “We’re like every other organization — struggling through economic times as well as trying to figure out ways to cut back and make ends meet. But it’s (curbside service) not mandatory.”

Another postal carrier recently sent out a different letter to residents who live along West Haven Boulevard encouraging them to install the curbside boxes.

Councilwoman Lois Watkins said residents recently had complained to her about feeling “threatened” by postal officials with having their mail withheld unless they paid for and installed a curbside mailbox.

Peter Tapia, who was a mail carrier for 30 years and headed up the local carrier’s union from the 1970s through the mid-1990s, said residents should not forfeit their right to have mail delivered to their porch.

He said curbside delivery would be bad for customers and mail carriers.

“It would be detrimental to the work force, and the union is sworn to protect and defend the work force,” he said. “It would increase their work load and their harassment. The workers in the post office are harassed daily.”

Tapia said curbside delivery is a ploy by management to lengthen carriers’ routes, eliminate routes and cut down on carriers.

“It will not improve service,” he said.

Tapia said curbside delivery also would create an unwarranted traffic hazard.

“A mail truck blocking one lane of traffic is like following a school bus dropping (off) children,” he said. “A curb mailbox creates a hardship for parking for most families that have multiple cars. Where will they park? Mail will not be delivered when the box is blocked.”

He said curbside delivery also requires much more gas use than the present delivery system in which the driver parks and walks the route.

“Curbside delivery requires the motor running all day. It’s a gross waste of expensive gas,” he said.

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2. 750 local postal employees sign petition to protest consolidation

American Postal Workers Union workers will ask Sen. Diane Feinstein help spare Oxnard facility

By Scott Hadly (Contact)
Tuesday, July 7, 2009

If the decision has been made to shut down the U.S. Postal Service’s mail processing facility in Oxnard, local postal employees want the decision reversed.

“We’ve gathered about 750 signatures on a petition,” said Roberta Molloy, president of the Channel Islands Area Local for the American Postal Workers Union.

On Wednesday, Molloy and other representatives of the local postal workers will go to Sen. Diane Feinstein’s Los Angeles office to hand over the petition and ask that she help spare the facility.

Although officials from the U.S. Postal Service have said no decision has been made, Molloy said last week that representatives of the American Postal Workers Union were informed at a meeting with top Postal Service managers that Oxnard was definitely on the list.

“That’s what we’ve been told,” Molloy said.

On Monday, union members picketed outside a postal facility in Oxnard to let people know of the consolidation plan, which might include closing one of the three Post Offices in the city. But Postal Service officials maintain that there are no firm plans for a consolidation or Post Office closure.

In late April, the city got a notice from the Postal Service saying the federal agency was looking into consolidating the Oxnard facility’s functions with a distribution

center in Santa Clarita. Along with the Oxnard facility, which handles all mail sent to ZIP codes that start with 930 — most of Ventura County and the southern portion of Santa Barbara County — there are distribution centers in Goleta, Santa Clarita and Los Angeles. There are 244 career employees working at the Oxnard facility and the consolidation would affect 75 to 100 of those positions, union officials said.

Last month, a Postal Service spokesman said a study that is looking at whether to consolidate the Oxnard operations with Santa Clarita had not been finished and isn't expected to be done for another nine months. The Postal Service is dealing with a big decline in mail volume and revenue. Oxnard is one of about 25 processing and distribution facilities across the country that might be closed to save money and improve efficiency.

According to the Postal Service, First-Class mail dropped by 9 billion pieces last year, or 4.5 percent of the total volume. But local union representatives said the consolidation plan would not just disrupt the lives of 75 to 100 workers, but could also delay the speed with which mail sent from this area is delivered. In addition, the savings would be muted because the Postal Service would have to cover the cost of relocating Oxnard employees, Molloy said.

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Wednesday, July 08, 2009

3. Gilani orders postal service's reorganisation

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani on Tuesday ordered reorganisation of Pakistan Post through efficient management, improvement of services and better marketing. During a visit to the Postal Staff College, he also directed the Ministry of Postal Services to ensure delivery of cost-effective, client-responsive and real-time postal service to the people. The prime minister underscored the need for up-gradation of infrastructure and office environment. He said Pakistan Post should be modernised to compete with the private sector and re-engineer its business procedures by integrating automation. Gilani emphasised that both range and delivery of postal service be improved with a focus on express mail delivery system. He appreciated Pakistan Post for starting schemes like saving bank services, payment to pensioners, life insurance, payment of money orders under Benazir Income Support Programme and Food Scheme by relying on their existing institutional facilities. He asked the Postal Services Ministry to further improve delivery in these areas. staff report

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July 08, 2009 18:31 PM

4. Azerbaijan's Postal Specialists Attend Courses In Thailand

BAKU, July 8 (Bernama) -- A team of specialists at Azerbaijan's state postal service, Azerpocht, have attended an ICT course in Thailand, Azerbaijan's news agency (AzerTAc) reported Wednesday quoting the country's Ministry of Communications and Information Technologies as saying.

Supported by the Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU), the courses provided an insight into application of electronic services in the postal system.

APPU is an inter-governmental organisation of 31 postal administrations of the Asian-Pacific region. APPU is affiliated to the Universal Postal Union, which is a specialized agency of the United Nations. The purpose of the APPU is to extend, facilitate and improve postal relations between member countries and to promote cooperation in the field of postal services.

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Posted on Tue, Jul. 07,

5. Stamp vending machines vanishing as post offices boost automation

By ELIZABETH ZAVALA
ezavala@star-telegram.com

Stamp vending machines at the post office are going the way of the pay phone.

The U.S. Postal Service is phasing out the vending machines, focusing instead on automated or online purchase options. Machines have already been removed from Tarrant County post offices; the nationwide effort should be completed by 2010.

Postal Service officials said the machines had become obsolete and too expensive to maintain.

"They were pretty antiquated," said Sam Bolen, a postal spokesman for the Fort Worth district. "The vending machines only accepted cash, while many customers preferred payment by credit card or debit card. The retrofitting of the machines to accept credit cards was not feasible."

The Postal Service has seen a drop in mail volume, and stamp sales have declined over the years, officials said.

"We're seeing pretty significant losses this year," Bolen said. "Prior to the recent fall in the economy, we were already seeing a decline because of the electronic commerce, like e-mail, and online applications, like online bill pay."

But Bolen said there are many more ways to buy stamps today.

"A month doesn't pass that someone's not surprised where they can buy stamps," he said, adding that grocery stores, drugstores and even some bank ATMs offer customers the option to buy stamps.

He also touted the new Automated Postal Centers used at the bigger, busier offices in the area. There are seven in Tarrant County.

"These APC machines take debit or credit cards and allow customers to mail letters, purchase stamps and mail packages. You can pay your post office box rental. You can do a lot more than a stamp vending machine can do" at the self-service kiosks, he said.

The new way might be convenient for most, but not for Blayne Paine of Fort Worth.

"I think it's messed up, that you can't buy out of the vending machines," he said Monday afternoon while waiting in line at the post office in the downtown Fort Worth federal building. "It doesn't really make sense to stand in long lines. They don't have enough people at the counter. It seems like you wouldn't have to wait in line and talk to somebody to buy a stamp."

Need stamps?

The U.S. Postal Service recently phased out stamp vending machines at its Tarrant County post offices and other locations, but other options exist to obtain them.

Automated Postal Centers

APCs can be found in busy post offices. Customers can weigh and mail letters and packages and buy sheets of 18 self-adhesive first-class stamps using credit and debit cards. Tarrant County post offices with APCs are: Kenneth Mack (formerly Wedgwood) Station, 3701 Alta Mesa Blvd., Fort Worth; Eighth Avenue Station, 2600 Eighth Ave., Fort Worth; Cityview Station, 7101 Bryant Irvin Road, Fort Worth; Jack D. Watson, 4600 Mark IV Parkway, Fort Worth; North Richland Hills, 6051 N. Davis Blvd., North Richland Hills; Ridglea Station, 3020 S. Cherry Lane, Fort Worth; and Trinity River Station, 4450 Oak Park Lane, Fort Worth.

Stamps by mail

Order forms for stamps can be obtained through a customers' carrier or local post office for delivery at a home or business. On rural routes, carriers can sell stamps and other postal services from their vehicles.

Online

Go to www.usps.com/shop, or call 800-STAMP24 (800-782-6724). Shipping and handling fees may apply.

Other-than-postal retailers

Stamp booklets can be obtained from many grocery, drug and retail stores. For a list of locations go to www.usps.com and select "Find a Post Office" then select the option "Alternate Locations to Buy Stamps." Or, call 800-ASK-USPS (800-275-8777) or the TTY number 877-TTY-2HLP (877-889-2457).

At the counter

All types of stamps will continue to be available at post office retail counters, where payment can be made by check, money order, cash, and credit or debit card

SOURCE: United States Postal Service

ELIZABETH ZAVALA, 817-390-7418

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