

POSTAL NEWS

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- 1. Postal Service Considering Branch Closings Printer Friendly Version. Aug 2, 2009.**
- 2. Army moves to consolidate postal services . Aug 6, 2009.**
- 3. Postal Service overhaul won't affect delivery much. July 31, 2009.**
- 4. Commission casts consumer net on postal dept. Aug 1, 2009.**

1. Postal Service Considering Branch Closings Printer Friendly Version

Sunday, Aug 2, 2009 @02:50pm CST

(Washington, DC) -- The U.S. Postal Service is examining a list of nearly 700 post offices that could be closed to cut costs.

During testimony in Congress last week, a high-ranking postal official said most of the closings would be in urban areas so it would not be difficult for people to find another branch.

Also suggested is ending Saturday delivery, which could save an estimated two- to three-billion dollars a year. In a Gallup Poll, 66-percent of people support the post office stopping Saturday delivery.

Mail volume dropped off five-percent last year. The postal service expects a 15-percent slide this year, resulting in a loss of seven-billion dollars.

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2. Army moves to consolidate postal services

By Dan Blottenberger, Stars and Stripes

BAMBERG, August 6, 2009. Germany — The Army plans to consolidate mailing centers scattered throughout communities into centralized locations called postal service centers.

The centers will combine unit and community mail rooms, regional post offices, Army post offices and official mail distribution centers all into one facility for each military community, according to Installation Management Command-Europe officials.

"We are really looking forward to this," said Douglas Stewart, postmaster for Warner Barracks post office in Bamberg. "Customers will be able to get everything done at once."

The Bamberg facility will nearly double in size and add a second floor to its postal service center as part of the consolidation.

Several bases have already begun consolidating their mail operations, including Grafenwöhr, Baumholder, Wiesbaden, Garmisch, and Stuttgart, in Germany, as well as Brussels and Chievres in Belgium, and Schinnen, Netherlands, according to an IMCOM-Europe news release.

Officials also are looking at ways to hasten mail delivery from the main distribution hub in Frankfurt, Germany, to bases around Europe.

"We're looking at ideas like reducing the number of regional post offices and delivering all mail directly to the postal service centers," said Monique Bagby, IMCOM-Europe postal transformation program manager. The transformation is scheduled to be complete throughout Europe by 2014, according to Bagby.

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3. Postal Service overhaul won't affect delivery much

By DAN BARKER, Times Staff Writer

Posted: 07/31/2009 10:46:11 AM MDT

Fort Morgan postal carrier Traci Dahl was out delivering mail Thursday afternoon. Some mail routes have changed due to a need for the U.S. Postal Service to economize at a time when mail volume is down in the recession. (Dan Barker/Fort Morgan Times)

Some Morgan County residents may have seen some slight changes to their mail delivery recently, but an overhaul of the U.S. Postal Service won't affect them much.

Post offices throughout Colorado are adjusting their carrier mail routes to help save on costs and make delivery more efficient. Up to 3,000 mail carrier routes at more than 150 post offices and stations in Wyoming and Colorado will be affected.

In Fort Morgan, most of those changes were final by July 18, said Fort Morgan Postmaster Paul Bustamante.

Some minor adjustments were made after that, in order to make sure that businesses received their mail in the morning, he said.

Overall, the changes in Fort Morgan will not impact people much, because there were not that many changes, Bustamante said.

The Brush Post Office made its changes last Saturday, said Brush Postmaster Tim Webster.

Four city routes were absorbed by the three full-time carriers, which saves a few hours of pay, but won't really affect delivery, he said.

Business mail goes out first, and mail should come in close to its regular time in Brush, Webster said.

However, the way the adjustments affect delivery could vary from post office to post office, he said.

Essentially, the Fort Morgan Post Office is making its routes come out as close to eight hours as possible for each carrier, said Fort Morgan carrier Cody Simon.

Nothing is changed as far as how mail is delivered, he said.

In his case, he lost a street from his route to another carrier and gained a street, Simon said.

Some households may see their mail delivered at 3 p.m. instead of 1 p.m., but that's about the extent of the change, Bustamante said.

It is tougher in some cities, where some routes were cut and redistributed, he said.

The USPS said it is facing a \$6.5 billion operating deficit this year, caused by declining mail volume and revenue due to the poor economy, as well as rising fuel, health benefit and other costs.

National mail volume in the first three quarters of 2009 was down by 15 percent from the same time period last year. USPS depends on mail volume, postage and service sales for its operating revenue. It is not tax-supported.

"The postal service needs to be highly efficient and to save on costs nationwide," said Colorado-Wyoming Postal Service District Manager Selwyn Epperson. "These route changes allow us to economize and to adjust the work time, amount of deliveries and travel of routes as necessary to reflect the changes in the mail volume."

The changes will save millions of dollars, he said.

"While we will try to minimize any customer inconvenience with these route changes, it is inevitable that some customers and addresses in these communities will have their mail delivered at a different time than what they are used to," Epperson said. "But our letter carriers, as always, will try to deliver your mail as early as possible.

Those who need early mail delivery may rent low-cost post office boxes.

Epperson said USPS wants to keep postage rates among the lowest in the world.

— Contact Dan Barker at business@fntimes.com.

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4. Commission casts consumer net on postal dept

Supriya Bhardwaj, TNN 1 August 2009, 12:31am

CHANDIGARH: In a landmark judgment, UT state consumer commission brought the postal department under the

ambit of Consumer Protection Act, stressing that in case of deficiency in service, it could be taken to task.

‘We want to make it clear that Section 6 of Indian Post Offices Act does not provide blanket immunity or protection to post office employees. As it is apparent from the facts of this case, postal officials feel secure under this provision and adopt a very arrogant and irresponsible attitude towards consumers,’ held UT state consumer commission headed by justice Pritam Pal, while deciding an appeal in favour of complainant Mohan Singh, a retired deputy chief engineer from Air India.

Finding the department deficient in service, the commission directed National Speed Post Centre (NSPC), Chandigarh, to pay Rs 5,000 as compensation to Singh.

Singh had stated that in February 2008 he had mailed an air ticket to his son in London through speed post, but it was not delivered. Singh said he sent a letter to Chandigarh postal authorities, claiming his son had to purchase another ticket due to the lapse. However, when he did not receive a reply, Singh filed a complaint with district consumer forum and sought compensation for harassment. Singh stated that he be entitled to one air ticket every year, which could be used either by him or members of his immediate family.

NSPC officials cited Section 6 of Indian Post Office Act, which states that the government or post office would not incur any liability for loss, misdelivery or damage to any postal article in course of transmission.

They also stated that Singh’s article had been further consigned to International Speed Post Centre, Delhi, but said they had not received any response from there. They added that they had also informed Singh about that.

The district forum had held that as the Indian Post Office Act protected officials from any liabilities, no compensation could be awarded to Singh. However, as postal officials were ready to pay double the speed post charges, the forum directed them to pay Rs 1,562 along with Rs 2,500 as cost of litigation to Singh.

Hoping against hope, Singh knocked the doors of state commission and sought compensation. Accepting his appeal, the commission held that this conduct of officials constituted a deficiency in service due to non-delivery of the article itself.

The commission stated, 'In such cases, as the complainant has no means to prove that the neglect was wilful or malafide, it is for the post office to prove it acted with due diligence and efficiency. And if something goes wrong despite that, postal officials cannot be held guilty.'

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Collected by Chairul Anwar, Bandung, Indonesia.

E-mail address : chairulanwar49@operamail.com, uyungchairul@plasa.com.