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## 1 **Autobiographical Sketch**

2

3 My name is Gary Sosniecki. My wife Helen and I are owners of The Vandalia  
4 Leader, a weekly newspaper in northeast Missouri, about 100 miles northwest of St.  
5 Louis. We're half an hour south of Mark Twain's Hannibal and a little over an hour  
6 northeast of Columbia, Mo., home of the University of Missouri. The purpose of my  
7 testimony is twofold: 1) to explain to the Commission the serious impact of a major  
8 increase in postal rates, as the Postal Service has proposed in this docket; and 2) to  
9 demonstrate how the confluence of other postal problems coupled with sudden rate  
10 shock can create negative impact upon small publishers.

11

### 12 **I. Background of The Vandalia Leader**

13

14 Vandalia's population is about 2,500, not including 1,900 inmates in the  
15 women's prison that was built about eight years ago on the edge of town. Vandalia  
16 used to be a lot bigger -- the population peaked at 3,170 in 1980 -- but people  
17 followed the jobs out of town when the firebrick plants and the garment factories  
18 began closing. We're grateful that the 500 jobs at the prison have added some  
19 stability to the workforce.

20

21 Vandalia also is a farming community. We're in the middle of Missouri's corn  
22 country. A new ethanol plant that will turn corn into fuel just opened this fall about nine  
23 miles from Vandalia, providing a new market for our farmers as well as helping our  
24 nation's energy needs.

25

26 But the economy of our small town is always on edge, as one finds in many  
27 rural areas of America, as the overall industrial and agricultural economy has  
28 changed in the past 20 years. That makes reaching readers at an affordable price and  
29 maintaining the mission of pulling the community together with a viable newspaper  
30 ever challenging.

31

1           Our newspaper was founded in 1874. It was started one month after Vandalia  
2 was incorporated and has published every week for 132 years. In its first 110 years,  
3 between 1893 and 2003, it was owned by only three families. My wife and I bought  
4 The Leader three years ago from a family that had owned it for 52 years. I am  
5 providing copies from issues in August as a library reference. NNA-LR-L-1.

6  
7           Today, The Leader averages 14 pages a week, though we tend to run a little  
8 bigger during the school year in order to squeeze in all the school sports, honor rolls,  
9 lunch menus and reports of student achievement. At the end of the school year, we  
10 publish a list of every award presented to local students. The list from the elementary  
11 school, kindergarten through sixth grade, fills two full pages of the newspaper, even  
12 with the type shrunk so small that, unfortunately, grandmas may have trouble reading  
13 it. I cover the awards assemblies myself. This year it took me about eight hours to  
14 typeset all the names of the elementary award winners.

15  
16           Besides being the owners, editors and publishers, Helen and I are the only full-  
17 time staff. We do almost all of the reporting and photography and almost all of the ad  
18 sales ourselves. We do some of the composing work ourselves -- designing ads and  
19 printing on the computer -- and we share the responsibility of laying out the pages  
20 every Tuesday night. My wife does all the bookkeeping, including maintaining the  
21 circulation list and running the weekly periodicals postage statements (Form 3541)  
22 out of the computer. We have a small commercial printing operation; my wife uses a  
23 compact digital printing press in the back of our building to print forms for other  
24 businesses, but the newspaper itself is printed in Louisiana, Mo., 30 minutes away.  
25 For the past year, we have used a type of e-mail to send our pages digitally to the  
26 printing plant. Technology is changing quickly in our business, and, as money allows,  
27 we do our best to keep up with it. We have been able to run full color on our front  
28 page for the past year, and we started a Web site two years ago. We now have 500  
29 readers a day on our Web site, which is pretty amazing for a town this small.

30

1 Publishing a weekly newspaper is a lot of work. Helen and I are in the office  
2 seven days and five evenings most weeks, including as late as 2:30 a.m. on Tuesday  
3 nights when we're getting the paper ready to go to press. When the school year  
4 starts, you'll find us working on the sidelines of the Van-Far High School football  
5 team, home and away, every Friday night. We don't miss too many basketball games  
6 either, boys or girls. The school is the center of life in a town the size of Vandalia, and  
7 we don't come up for air very much during the nine months of the school year.

8  
9 Despite the long hours, this is the life we love. We love reporting the news of  
10 our community each week, recording its history week-by-week. Our basketball team  
11 won the state championship in 2004, an event that electrified and unified our  
12 community. What a thrill to be able to report on that excitement for the community, to  
13 have our news stories and photos clipped for so many scrapbooks.

14  
15 Our news serves an educational mission as well. We are in the second year of  
16 a drought, the small reservoir from which Vandalia pumps its drinking water is running  
17 dry, and, through the newspaper, the city has tried to encourage our citizens to  
18 conserve water voluntarily.

19  
20 Of course, a small-town newspaper is more than just news. The size of each  
21 week's newspaper is determined by the amount of advertising we sell (about 50  
22 percent of the space needs to be advertising if we're going to pay our mortgage, our  
23 week-to-week bills and put food on our table) and we get a lot of satisfaction helping  
24 other small businesses create affordable and effective ads that bring customers  
25 through their doors. My wife designed a small ad (1/8 of a page) a few weeks ago for  
26 a locally owned lumber yard that wanted to hold a linoleum sale. The results were  
27 fantastic -- they were swamped with business. That's part of our job: to help create  
28 commerce in our town. Those goods and services that are sold as a result of our  
29 advertising help put food on the table of other families in our community.

30

1           Our newspaper also tries to offer leadership through our editorial page.  
2           Recently I was privileged to win the 2006 Golden Quill Award from the International  
3           Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors for outstanding editorial writing. The award was  
4           for an editorial I wrote last year entitled, "Stop the rumor-mongering." I described  
5           rumors in Vandalia as "a blood sport," and I discussed how they had hurt the  
6           community, especially our school district.

7  
8           Small-town newspaper publishers like Helen and me also try to be active in our  
9           communities beyond the pages of our newspaper. I help organize the community  
10          garage sale twice a year and am a member of Rotary. Helen serves on the foundation  
11          board of the county hospital. The Missouri Press Association has honored us twice  
12          with a first-place award in Community Service (1992 and 1998) and we received first  
13          place in Community Service from the National Newspaper Association in 1985.

14  
15          This personal and civic history is important to helping the Commission to  
16          understand the impact of large postal rate increases upon small-town newspapers  
17          and upon the small towns they serve. We play an essential role. Without us, the  
18          community loses a lot of the glue that holds it together.

## 19 20       **II. The Vandalia Leader Depends upon Periodicals Mail Delivery**

21  
22          The Vandalia Leader, like all the newspapers we have owned or worked for in  
23          our careers, depends on the U.S. mail for much of its delivery.

24  
25          We print 2,450 copies a week, and, on average, we mail 1,582 of them. Of that  
26          number, 924 are mailed inside Audrain County, our "In-County" location, while 677  
27          are mailed outside the county. Some of those out-of-county papers actually just travel  
28          a few miles, because Vandalia is close to the county line of Ralls and Pike counties.  
29          The towns of Curryville, Middletown, Wellsville, Perry and Center, for example, are  
30          part of our market area, even though they are in neighboring counties. None of the

1 newspapers Helen and I have owned have been located in the county seat, as that  
2 location made them too expensive to purchase.

3

4 The remainder of our newspapers are sold at our office and at stores in  
5 Vandalia, Farber, Middletown and Laddonia. Our average paid circulation as listed in  
6 our Statement of Ownership (Form 3526) filed Sept. 16, 2005, was 2,234. Total  
7 distribution, including 17 free copies, averaged 2,251. We are the truly small  
8 periodicals in the mailstream. While there may be weekly newspapers in our industry  
9 with 15,000, even 30,000 circulation, it is only newspapers with small circulation  
10 (typically under 5,000) like ours that use the mail to deliver our product.

11

12 The Postal Service requires us to do the same work it requires of much, much  
13 larger businesses, if we want the lowest available rates, and if we hope to have  
14 reliable delivery. The developments of the past few years have created a hardship on  
15 small publishing teams like Helen and me.

16

17 For instance, in order to get timely delivery these days, I must drive the  
18 newspapers to two post offices outside Vandalia myself every Wednesday morning.  
19 (We have a part-time helper who delivers newspapers to four other post offices for  
20 mailing and makes a second delivery to our Vandalia Post Office.)

21

22 Mail preparation, which has to precede these errands, also is increasingly time-  
23 consuming. After our newspapers are delivered from the printing plant by 7:30 a.m.  
24 Wednesdays, my wife applies the mailing labels by hand, using a tabletop machine  
25 about the size of a toaster, called a Dispensa-matic U-45, that moves each label into  
26 position so Helen's fingers can grab it. We use PAVE-certified software, despite our  
27 small size, so Helen must be careful to keep the labeled newspapers in order,  
28 because the labels have been walk-sequenced for each of the four Vandalia routes  
29 and the holders of Post Office boxes. (For the convenience of one of the Vandalia  
30 mail carriers, who is left-handed, Helen applies labels to the top-left of the front page  
31 for her route, rather than the customary top-right.)

1

2           When the stack of newspapers reaches about 50, Helen moves the stack  
3 across the table to Judy Flowers, a part-time employee, who inserts preprinted  
4 advertising circulars into the open flap of the quarter-folded newspapers, again,  
5 making sure the papers remain walk-sequenced. We average two to five advertising  
6 circulars a week, usually from two supermarkets and a lumber yard and/or a hardware  
7 store. In order to meet postal regulations, we must refold some of the inserts we  
8 receive so that they do not extend beyond the edge of the newspaper when inserted.  
9 Two part-time employees work on Monday afternoons, refolding the inserts. They  
10 return on Tuesday afternoons, after our advertising deadline, and “pre-insert” the  
11 circulars, assembling them into single packages that Judy can handle efficiently  
12 during “crunch time” on Wednesday mornings.

13

14           When Judy finishes inserting each stack, she ties it snugly with plastic twine  
15 similar to what farmers use to tie hay bales; we do not have an automated tying  
16 machine. We now must take extra care to be sure our tying is in accord with the  
17 Postal Service's new rules for bundle integrity.

18

19           Each Vandalia route has three to four bundles. At 8:50 a.m., I load the bundles  
20 into the back of Helen's car and drive them a block and a half to the loading dock of  
21 the Vandalia U.S. Post Office. Most of the time, Chris Hull, the excellent officer in  
22 charge, has left a cart for me on the dock. I load the bundles onto the cart (there is no  
23 mailing sack involved any longer, as we are trying to follow the Postal Service's  
24 preference that we avoid them), carefully keeping them segregated according to  
25 route, then ring the bell. Chris or one of his efficient clerks, Gail Breneman or Linda  
26 Lower, open the door and pull the cart into the back room, where the carriers are  
27 sorting their mail for the day. I pick up extra sacks or tubs (whatever we need to  
28 complete the out-of-town mailing for that day) and return to the office.

29

30           The carriers deliver our newspapers to our local subscribers that same day.  
31 That timely delivery is important, and makes our careful preparation essential. I can

1 attend a meeting of the Vandalia Board of Aldermen, the city's governing body, on a  
2 Tuesday night, or cover an election, or cover a Van-Far High School basketball game  
3 or academic awards assembly on a Tuesday night and know our readers will get the  
4 news the following day.

5  
6 That is the good news in Vandalia. Our local post office is very efficient.

7  
8 The bigger challenge is in getting newspapers delivered promptly to the  
9 communities that are in the vicinity of Vandalia but are served by their own post  
10 offices. Many of the subscribers in these neighboring communities work in Vandalia;  
11 some students attend school in Vandalia. These people shop in Vandalia, and it is  
12 critical to our local businesses that the ads in our newspaper are seen promptly. They  
13 are often trying to compete with a supercenter somewhere else.

14  
15 For many years, we and the prior owners of The Vandalia Leader have drop-  
16 shipped newspapers at Curryville (10 miles east of Vandalia) and Farber (six miles  
17 west). Those papers also were delivered to subscribers on Wednesdays.

18  
19 Until this year, newspapers to all other towns were mailed in Vandalia.

### 20 21 **III. Service Declines Have Cost Us Time and Money**

22  
23 Changes in postal processing, the new 24-piece sack rule and other elements  
24 within USPS that we do not understand, have caused delivery to other towns in close  
25 proximity to become so erratic that we have been forced to take on a great deal of  
26 new work in order to get the paper into readers' hands.

27  
28 I have attached an appendix with a short summary of the complaints from  
29 readers. These are readers in our local market -- not Florida or Arizona -- although we  
30 get complaints from our snowbirds as well.

31

1 I want to emphasize that the appendix includes the worst examples. Service to  
2 Perry and Center (again, only 20 miles from Vandalia) routinely takes two days.  
3 Service to Mexico, our county seat, about 35 miles from Vandalia, also routinely takes  
4 two days.

5  
6 I have been told by the USPS that those are the service standards, and that I  
7 should not expect faster delivery than that. Mail to Perry and Center must go from  
8 Vandalia to St. Louis to Quincy, Ill., before coming back to Perry and Center. Mail to  
9 Mexico must go from Vandalia to St. Louis to Columbia, Mo., before coming back to  
10 Mexico, even though Mexico is in the same county as Vandalia.

11  
12 The problem is compounded when newspapers are hung up an additional day  
13 or longer in St. Louis, which has become a “sink hole” for newspaper delivery. We  
14 should be able to count on our newspapers not spending more than one night in the  
15 Gateway District bulk-mail plant at St. Louis. We should be able to count on our  
16 newspapers being dispatched on the correct truck out of St. Louis. We should be able  
17 to count on newspapers that go to St. Louis being delivered to other towns in the St.  
18 Louis distribution area the next day. We should be able to count on newspapers that  
19 go to St. Louis, then Quincy or Columbia, being delivered back to our area in two  
20 days. Back in the bad old days before automation, those were considered slow  
21 deliveries. Now that we are efficient, things seem to be getting worse.

22  
23 **a. What we do**

24  
25 So, starting with our Feb. 1, 2006, newspaper, we began drop-shipping our  
26 newspaper in Middletown. Because of Middletown’s proximity to Laddonia, another  
27 town that is important to our advertisers, we created a circle route so a part-time  
28 employee could drop off papers at both the Middletown and Laddonia post offices.  
29 J.D. leaves on this route, a 50-mile circle, at 8 a.m. every Wednesday so that 27  
30 newspapers arrive in Middletown and 99 in Laddonia before carriers leave on their  
31 routes.

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To address the delivery problem to Mexico, our county seat where our biggest advertiser lives, we began drop-shipping as well. We take those bundles to Rush Hill, Mo., 19 miles from Vandalia. A rural carrier from Mexico, who also services the Rush Hill rural route, picked up our Mexico newspapers and took them to the Mexico Post Office for next-day delivery, an arrangement that was approved by the Gateway District. By doing this, we managed to keep the Mexico newspapers out of both St. Louis and Columbia.

This arrangement worked satisfactorily, but it did not solve the problem of chronically late newspapers to other towns southwest of us. This situation came to a head with our June 28, 2006, issue, which did not arrive in Benton City, Mo., until July 5. (Benton City also is in our county, about 30 miles from Vandalia.) According to James D. Fannon of the Columbia Post Office, our June 28 Benton City newspapers did not arrive in Columbia until that day, July 5, and they came from Kansas City, not St. Louis. How they got to Kansas City remains a mystery.

With the help of Mexico Postmaster Rick Ayers, we came up with a plan to drop-ship all of our ZIP code 650-653 newspapers in Rush Hill every week. A USPS truck picks them up in Rush Hill. It stops in Mexico, where our Mexico newspapers are removed. The truck then continues to Columbia, where our newspapers are sorted and sent back to towns in the 650-653 ZIP codes. Thus, we are able to avoid any delays in St. Louis, except for the additional time and expense of moving all of those papers to Rush Hill.

**b. What it Costs--more than it appears**

Just to get newspapers within our core market delivered, we now have to truck copies to six post offices ourselves: Vandalia (two deliveries), Curryville, Farber, Middletown, Laddonia and Rush Hill. Here are some of the costs involved:

- 1       ▪ 88 extra miles of driving on my pickup every Wednesday. Based on the 2006  
2       GSA Privately Owned Vehicle Mileage Reimbursement Rate, those 88 miles  
3       are costing Helen and me \$39.16 a week (88 miles x 44.5 cents).
- 4
- 5       ▪ Extra insurance to allow our part-timer, J.D., to drive our truck is costing us  
6       \$2.77 a week.
- 7
- 8       ▪ Another part-time worker to cover for J.D. while he is doing postal work, which  
9       costs us \$22 a week.

10

11       Thus, our total extra expense is \$63.93 a week. That does not count the lost  
12       time that might have been used for revenue-producing pursuits or covering the news.

13

14       The USPS does give a small discount for drop-shipping at DDU's (Vandalia,  
15       Curryville, Farber, Middletown, Laddonia and Rush Hill), but nothing for the papers we  
16       deliver to Rush Hill for other communities in order to avoid St. Louis (Mexico, Benton  
17       City, others in the 650-653 ZIP codes). The DDU discount amounts to pennies.

18

19       To see how much of an "incentive" I had from the Postal Service for this extra  
20       work, I compared two very similar issues: one from before we started drop shipping  
21       on Oct. 19, 2005, and one after, on July 19, 2006. Indeed, even with the drop-  
22       shipping incentives, the July bill was \$2.32 higher, not cheaper, than the October bill.

23

24       We lost over \$60 that week by being so much more efficient and helping USPS  
25       to get our papers out in time. That loss is replicated each week in similar magnitudes.  
26       And, again, that does not include the lost time that Helen or I could have spent selling  
27       advertising or covering news instead of helping our driver or preparing the extra  
28       routes. In light of these recurring service problems, the Commission should do all in  
29       its power to avoid excessive postage increases.

30

31

1           **c. Nonetheless, we try to be efficient**

2  
3           Our papers have been long-time members of NNA. We follow the advice of  
4 NNA's Postal Committee and its chairman, Max Heath, who tries to help community  
5 newspapers use postal services most efficiently. For a couple who got into the  
6 business because we wanted to serve our communities, we are sometimes amazed  
7 at how much we have had to do just to make sure our government can make its  
8 postal system run well enough to allow this service to take place.  
9

10           We have been diligent in avoiding the use of sacks wherever possible.  
11 However, we are not permitted to use any other sort of container for mail headed to 5  
12 digit and 3 digit destinations.  
13

14           Since the week we bought this newspaper, we have used PAVE-certified  
15 circulation-management software developed by Interlink Inc. of Berrien Springs, Mich.  
16 My wife religiously submits our circulation list for every CASS certification and walk-  
17 sequencing the USPS requires.  
18

19           Earlier this year, we spent \$149 for a new laser printer just so we can print the  
20 new facsimile Form 3541. Interlink has just notified us that our software renewal for  
21 the next year will cost \$832.34, a 54.9-percent increase from \$537.36 for the past  
22 year. That \$294.98 increase is on top of any postal increase for next year and by itself  
23 represents a \$5.67-per-week hidden rate increase. Some of these price increases are  
24 because of the many adjustments to the software required by changing USPS rules  
25 and regulations. It is not a small expense for a paper our size, especially considering  
26 that until a decade ago, we didn't need to buy any software at all to mail our paper.  
27  
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1 **IV. The impact of postage increases is greater than a few pennies per copy.**

2  
3 If the Commission accepts the Postal Service's request for an excessive rate  
4 increase, we are looking at an excessively high increase of 25-30 percent for in-  
5 county mail next May.

6  
7 Our in-county postage for our Aug. 2, 2006, edition was \$63.44, which means,  
8 under the proposal, our in-county postage would increase \$15.86 to \$19.03 a week.  
9 Maybe that doesn't sound like much, but add to it the \$5.67 per week that we'll be  
10 paying our software vendor in order to keep up with USPS regulations. Add to it the  
11 \$63.93 more per week we're paying to drop-ship newspapers to neighboring towns.  
12 Add to that a portion of the increase in the software price -- let's be conservative and  
13 say it is \$5 a week. All together, we're looking at an increase of \$90.46 to \$93.63 a  
14 week to mail our newspapers. That is over \$4,700 a year.

15  
16 We are getting crunched. The printing plant has raised the price to print our  
17 newspaper four times in the three years we have owned it, and we expect another  
18 increase before the year is out. As owners of a small business, Helen and I must buy  
19 private health insurance. This year, our rates went up \$117 per month -- to \$693 per  
20 month total, or \$8,316 per year -- for policies with \$2,500 deductible.

21  
22 We understand the Postal Service does not believe its proposed rates amount  
23 to much because they manifest themselves in such small numbers. For a \$70 billion  
24 corporation, our small increase no doubt seems insignificant. But whether an increase  
25 of 25-30 percent results in a few dollars more expense each week for a small  
26 business or tens of thousands for a company of larger scale, this sort of abrupt  
27 ratcheting of prices has the same result. It has to be judged in the context of the  
28 business it affects. Increases of the magnitude we are seeing are simply impossible to  
29 absorb.

30

1 We are limited to how much we can increase our subscription rates to cover  
2 these increases, especially the postage increases, because neither of our primary  
3 competitors uses the mail for its main distribution. To our west, The Mexico Ledger, a  
4 daily newspaper, uses private carriers to deliver newspapers to Vandalia subscribers.  
5 To our east, The People's Tribune, a newspaper from Bowling Green that covers  
6 Vandalia, gives its copies away at stores, including 16 locations in Vandalia. It is hard  
7 for a paid-distribution, mailed newspaper that competes against a free-distribution,  
8 nonmailed newspaper to raise its subscription price and keep all its subscribers.

9  
10 We already are struggling with declining circulation outside of our market area.  
11 Until we last raised subscription rates on Feb. 1, 2005, our cost to print and mail *The*  
12 *Leader* "elsewhere in Missouri" was \$26.84 a year, a figure that included no labor, no  
13 overhead and no profit. Our subscription rate, which we inherited from the prior  
14 owners, was \$18.65 plus tax, so we were losing \$8.19 on every reader who lived in  
15 cities such as St. Louis, Columbia and Springfield.

16  
17 Until the increase, our cost to print and mail *The Leader* to postal Zone 7  
18 (California, for example) was \$30.66 per subscriber per year. Again, that figure  
19 included nothing except what we paid the printing plant and the post office. By  
20 charging \$21 for an out-of-state subscription, we were losing \$9.66 per subscriber per  
21 year.

22  
23 Our current "elsewhere in Missouri" subscription rate is \$32.53 per year plus  
24 sales tax. Our current out-of-state subscription rate is \$40 per year.

25  
26 The out-of-area rate increases thus far have had a dramatic effect on our  
27 circulation. In July 2004, before the increase, we averaged 681 out-of-area  
28 subscribers a week. In July 2006, almost a year and a half after the increase, we  
29 averaged only 610 out-of-area subscribers a week, a decrease of 10.4 percent. Many  
30 of those former subscribers probably instead are reading our Web site, which  
31 generates no revenue for the USPS and only limited revenue for Helen and me.

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We cannot risk a similar decrease in in-county, in-market subscribers, which could happen if we increased our subscription rates to cover these added mail-related expenses.

If our in-county, in-market penetration falls, our advertisers could start abandoning us.

If our advertisers start abandoning us, our paper will get smaller.

Less news will be covered.

Less student achievement will be reported.

Less leadership will be provided.

None of those options is acceptable to me or to my community.

If in-county postage must be increased, we need a reasonable increase, one that can be passed along to our subscribers without a resulting loss of circulation.

And we need meaningful discounts as incentives for those of us who are dropshipping our newspapers to other towns, a task that we continue to pay the USPS to do.

The Commission has traditionally recognized that its decisions help small periodicals like ours to stay in business. We do hope the Postal Service will do its best to control its costs. But we are dependent upon the Commission to make sure we do not pay rates that are higher than are justified. I appreciate the opportunity to explain to the Commission why its decision is so important.

1 Appendix A

2

3 A litany of service problems:

4

5 Our Oct. 13, 2004, newspapers arrived in Middletown (about 20 miles from Vandalia)  
6 and Wellsville (about 30 miles from Vandalia, but with rural routes much closer) six  
7 days after being mailed. Papers to our county seat, Mexico, Mo., 35 miles away, took  
8 a week to deliver.

9

10 Our Nov. 3, 2004, newspapers were mailed to Middletown that day. The USPS  
11 returned them to Vandalia the next morning. Helen then drove them to Middletown  
12 personally rather than have them delayed further.

13

14 Our Nov. 17, 2004, newspapers arrived in Perry and Center (about 20 miles from  
15 Vandalia) five days after being mailed. Papers to Mexico, Mo., also took five days.

16

17 Our Jan. 12, 2005, newspapers arrived in Mexico, Mo., seven days after being  
18 mailed.

19

20 Our March 2, 2005, newspapers arrived in Mexico, Mo., three days after being  
21 mailed.

22

23 Our April 13, 2005, newspapers arrived in Perry and Center three days after being  
24 mailed.

25

26 Our Dec. 21, 2005, newspapers arrived in Wellsville and Middletown three days after  
27 being mailed.

28

29 Our Jan. 4, 2006, newspapers arrived in Mexico, Mo., on Jan. 13, nine days after  
30 being mailed, on the same day as our Jan. 11 edition. Newspapers to Perry and  
31 Center took six days to arrive.

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Our March 22, 2006, newspapers still hadn't arrived in Perry and Center in two days and, according to the USPS at the time, appeared to be missing. Helen relabeled another batch and drove them to the two towns herself. Subscribers received two copies of the same edition that Saturday.

Our June 14, 2006, newspapers arrived for Route 2, Wellsville, subscribers two days after being mailed. The mixed bundle of newspapers for Wellsville subscribers who aren't on Route 2 took six days to arrive. Papers took three days getting to Perry and Center.

Our June 28, 2006, newspapers arrived in Wellsville two days after being mailed.