BEFORE THE
POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20268

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POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

In the Matter of: :

CRANBERRY, PA. 16319 :
Post Office State ZIP Code

Docket No: A 2010-1

Postal Regulatory Commission
Office of the Chief Admin. Officer
DEC 09 2009

The Committee for the Citizens and Customers of Cranberry, PA.16319, Petitioner(s) :

PARTICIPANT STATEMENT

1. Petitioner(s) are appealing the Postal Service's Final Determination concerning the CRANBERRY post office. The Final Determination was posted ~~(not posted)~~.
(date)

2. In accordance with applicable law, 39 U.S.C. § 404(b)(5), the Petitioner(s) request the Postal Regulatory Commission to review the Postal Service's determination on the basis of the record before the Postal Service in the making of the determination.

3. Petitioners: Please set out below the reasons why you believe the Postal Service's Final Determination should be reversed and returned to the Postal Service for further consideration. (See pages of the Instructions for an outline of the kinds of reasons the law requires us to consider.) Please be as specific as possible. Please continue on additional paper if you need more space and attach the additional page(s) to this form.

Please see attached letter and associated documents, also newspaper article.

THE COMMITTEE FOR THE CITIZENS AND CUSTOMERS OF CRANBERRY, PENNSYLVANIA POST OFFICE (ZIP CODE 16319) PRC DOCKET NUMBER A2010-1

PO Box 33
Cranberry, PA 16319

Phone (814) 676-1335
Chaney@csonline.net

November 30, 2009

Office of the Secretary
Postal Regulatory Commission
901 New York, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20268

Dear Members of the Postal Regulatory Commission,

In the matter of the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) Docket Number A2010-1 (the closing/ consolidation of the Cranberry, Pennsylvania Post Office, 16319), we, the Committee for the Citizens and Customers of the Cranberry, Pennsylvania Post Office, are submitting the following Participant Statement for your review.

In accordance with applicable law, 39 U.S.C. § 404(b)(5), the Petitioners request the Postal Regulatory Commission to review the Postal Service's determination on the basis of the record before the Postal Service in the making of the determination.

The Petitioners herein would like to submit the following facts to the Postal Regulatory Commission for consideration in the review to reverse the Postal Service's Final Determination to close/consolidate the Cranberry, PA 16319 Post Office.

The Post Office in Cranberry, Pennsylvania 16319 (referred to herein as the Cranberry Post Office) was established in 1835 and has proudly and efficiently served the community ever since that time. In the course of the 174 years of service, the Cranberry Post Office has watched the Village of Cranberry and the surrounding region of service grow from a small town into a thriving community. The Cranberry Post Office, until the current closing/ consolidation into the neighboring post office of Seneca, Pennsylvania, has served a large residential population as well as an expanding commercial base of patrons. A discontinuation of service from the former Cranberry Post Office is viewed by many of the patrons as much more than an inconvenience in postal service, but also as a loss of identity to a very proud community. Evidence of this can easily be seen by the number of customers to have signed the previously submitted "Petition opposing CLOSING/ CONSOLODATION of CRANBERRY, PA, 16319 POST OFFICE."

On September 12, 2009, business at the Cranberry Post Office was Temporarily Suspended under protests from the community by the United States Postal Service (USPS). The USPS has contended that the landlord of the Cranberry facility had discontinued the lease due to his unwillingness to negotiate a "Fair Market Price" with them. It has been brought to the attention of this committee that this "Temporary Suspension" does not meet the United States Postal Services guidelines for Eviction, 213.2 EMERGENCY SUSPENSION: "The cancellation of a lease or rental agreement when no suitable alternate quarters are available in the community." Also, Handbook 101, Definition: 611 b. "Termination of a lease or rental agreement when no other quarters suitable for housing an independent Post Office are not available, especially when the termination is sudden or unexpected." It was determined that at least three vacant buildings were/are available locally and that the USPS had known in advance that the landlord wanted to sell his building housing the Cranberry Post Office.

Notice of the above mentioned suspension was given to the customers of the Cranberry Post Office via letter dated July 31, 2009 from the United States Postal Service. Representatives of the United States Postal Service had then told patrons of the Cranberry Post Office at the meeting held in Seneca, Pennsylvania on August 19, 2009, that the USPS could not look at other sites to house the Cranberry Post Office. The representatives also sited the current financial status of the USPS as another reason to close/ consolidate the Cranberry Post Office. It is understood that in the USPS's Handbook 101, that if a Post Office is operating at a deficit, the Postal Service is prevented from closing that Post Office. Cranberry Postal customers were also told at this meeting that they would be able to keep their current Cranberry addresses after the closing/ consolidation. However, some of the Cranberry Rural Route patrons ended up being forced to use the services of the Kennerdell Pennsylvania Post Office, given no other choice but to change their address.

In addition to the facts stated above, it is the understanding of the Committee for the Citizens and Customers of Cranberry, PA 16319 Post Office that the Postal Service has further violated it's own regulations/ procedures in making the Final Determination to close/ consolidate the aforementioned Cranberry Post Office. This violated regulation was explained to the patrons of the former Cranberry Post Office in a letter from the United States Postal Service, dated July 31, 2009. Said portion of letter is entitled "SUMMARY OF POST OFFICE CHANGE REGULATIONS" and is attached hereto.

The statement taken from that letter reads as follows: "An initial investigation and any subsequent formal proposal to discontinue a post office originate with the postal field managers responsible for the post offices in that area. The proposal must explain the services recommended as substitutes and the rationale that supports this recommendation. The written proposal is prominently posted for 60 days at the affected post offices, along with an "Invitation for Comments," which formally invites customer comments. At the end of the 60-day comment period, additional review is made at lower and upper levels of postal management."

"When a final decision is made at Postal Headquarters in Washington, DC, that decision is posted in affected post offices for 30 days, during which customers may appeal the decision to the Postal Rate Commission in Washington, DC. The Postal Rate Commission has 120 days to consider and decide an appeal. Even without an appeal, no post office may be closed sooner than 60 days after the public posting of the final decision."

The Committee for the Citizens and Customers of Cranberry, PA 16319 Post Office would attest that no such written proposal and Invitation for Comments had ever been posted on the affected Post Office premises. A copy of the attached letter of July 31, 2009 had been posted on the affected Post Office premises by the Postmaster after it's receipt, as a courtesy to the customers since no other prior written proposal from the area's postal field managers had been placed. It was conveyed by the then active postmaster to this committee that no written proposal or Invitation for Comments had ever been received to post during the time encompassing the closing/ consolidation of the Cranberry Post Office.

It is in this matter, that this committee feels the patrons of the Cranberry Post Office have been illegally denied their opportunity to help save their Post Office from the discontinuation of the quality service they had enjoyed until recently.

The discontinuation of this service to our community from the Cranberry Post Office has resulted in much dissatisfaction with the conduct and quality of the United States Postal service, given the "broken promises", the Postal Service's general insensitivity to our community, and the violations of regulation and procedure to enable our citizens to have their legal say in the above-stated matters.

The Committee for the Citizens and Customers of Cranberry, PA 16319 Post Office would like to see postal service reinstated into the Village of Cranberry in the presence of a local post office (the Cranberry Post Office) again, and furthermore believe that the community represents a large enough population and commerce base to necessitate such an action.

Sincerely,

The Committee for the Citizens and Customers of Cranberry, PA 16319 Post office.

UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE

July 31, 2009

Dear Postal Customer:

The lease at the Cranberry Post Office will expire on September 18, 2009 and due to the lessor refusing to negotiate a new lease at "fair market" price, it will be necessary to suspend services at the close of business on Friday, September 11, 2009. This change will not lead to a formal proposal to permanently close the office, unless we conclude that the community would still be afforded the maximum degree of regular and effective postal services. A community meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 19th at 7:00pm at the Seneca Volunteer Fire Company, 3490 State Route 257, Seneca, PA to address your concerns.

Effective Saturday, September 12, 2009, delivery and retail services will be provided by the Seneca Post Office. Customers presently receiving rural delivery will not experience a change in service, with the possible exceptions of having to pick up undeliverable parcels and accountable mail at the Seneca Post Office. The carriers from Cranberry will be relocated to the Seneca Post Office. Those customers who have a post office box at Cranberry will need to pick up their mail at the Seneca office. Current box patrons may request rural delivery if this form of delivery would be more convenient.

Rural delivery eliminates the daily visit to the post office. This is particularly beneficial to senior citizens, people with disabilities, and folks who have work schedules that coincide with the hours that the Post Office is open. You will have 24-hour access to your mail. In addition, the rural carrier can provide all the retail services provided at the Cranberry Post Office. Enclosed is information about some of the services available from the carrier. Most transactions do not require meeting a carrier at the mailbox. Stamp Order envelopes and Money Order Application forms are available for your convenience. Rural patrons also have the option of placing a note in the mailbox, along with proper payment, requesting stamps and services that will be provided by the carrier. If you are not available to sign for a piece of accountable mail or accept a large parcel at the time of delivery, the carrier will return the item to the Seneca Post Office. You may pick up the article at the Seneca Post Office, request redelivery on another day convenient to you, or authorize the carrier to deliver the item to another person. If appropriate, post office box refunds will be provided by the Cranberry Postmaster.

Customers who wish to obtain post office box service may do so at the Seneca Post Office, located two miles away. The Seneca Post Office has lobby access 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Window service hours at Seneca are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 800 a.m. to Noon on Saturday. Post office boxes are available at this location at the same fees.

If you have any questions concerning the placement of rural mailboxes or the services available to you through the rural carrier, please contact the Seneca postmaster at (814) 677-2015 or the Cranberry postmaster at (814) 676-3769.

Received Aug 1, 2009
A 2010-1
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July 31, 2009

I realize with change there is always concern. A decision to permanently discontinue operations at the Cranberry Post Office has not yet been made. In the near future, we will be contacting you to explain our long term plans and solicit your comments. In the interim, we are confident that employees at the Seneca Office will continue to provide the efficient delivery and service you deserve.

Sincerely,

Junius J. Johnson
Manager, Post Office Operations

Enclosures

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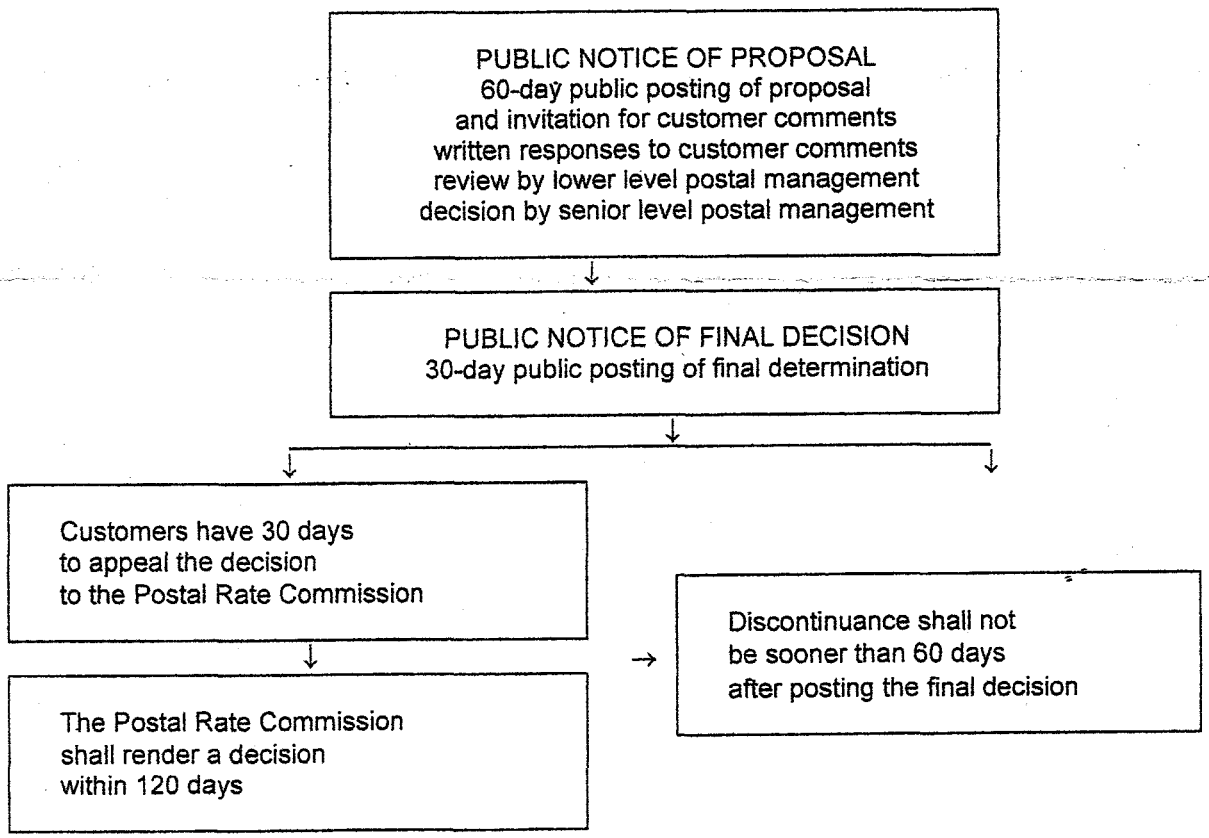
UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE

SUMMARY OF POST OFFICE CHANGE REGULATIONS

Certain regulations based on federal law apply when postal managers propose to replace a post office with an alternate form of postal service. These regulations are designed to ensure that the reasons for proposing such changes in postal service are fully disclosed at a stage when customers can make helpful contributions toward a final decision. The full text of the statutory regulations appears in Title 39, United States Code, Section 404(b), while the implementing regulations appear in Title 39, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 241.3.

An initial investigation and any subsequent formal proposal to discontinue a post office originate with postal field managers responsible for post offices in that area. The proposal must explain the services recommended as substitutes and the rationale that supports this recommendation. The written proposal is prominently posted for 60 days at affected post offices, along with an "Invitation for Comments," which formally invites customer comments. At the end of the 60-day comment period, additional review is made at lower and upper levels of postal management.

When a final decision is made at Postal Headquarters in Washington, DC, that decision is posted in affected post offices for 30 days, during which customers may appeal the decision to the Postal Rate Commission in Washington, DC. The Postal Rate Commission has 120 days to consider and decide an appeal. Even without an appeal, no post office may be closed sooner than 60 days after the public posting of the final decision.



A 2010-1
PRC Docket Number

July 31, 2009

UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE

POST OFFICE ON WHEELS
SERVICES AVAILABLE FROM RURAL AND HIGHWAY CONTRACT ROUTE CARRIERS

You can eliminate almost all trips to the Post Office, because doing business with the Postal Service is as close as your mailbox. The carrier can provide virtually all postal services to you, and most transactions do not require meeting the carrier at the mailbox. Some of the most frequently used services are:

MAILING PACKAGES

Carriers will accept packages at the mailbox without a customer being present, provided the postage is fully prepaid, and the customer is known to reside or conduct business at that collection point. The package MUST have a matching return address that is the same as the collection point. If postage has not been applied, estimate the amount of postage needed and leave the money in the mailbox. If insurance is desired, the value of the contents must be specified. The carrier will take the package to the Post Office, and it will be weighed to determine the appropriate rate. The package will be mailed that same day. The carrier will leave the customer's change and insurance receipt, if appropriate, in the mailbox on the next delivery day.

PURCHASING STAMPS BY MAIL

The Stamps by Mail program provides customers the opportunity to purchase stamps, envelopes, and postal cards by using Form 3227-R, *Stamp Purchase Order (Rural)*, available from the Post Office or the carrier. Commemorative stamps and stamp-collecting products are also available. The customer addresses the postage paid order form envelope, encloses payment by personal check or postal money order made payable to the United States Postal Service, and mails the form (postage-free) or leaves it in the mailbox for the carrier to pick up. Most orders are processed overnight, and some immediately.

PURCHASING POSTAL MONEY ORDERS

Customers may purchase money orders by meeting the carrier at the mailbox, completing an application, and paying the carrier (in cash) the price of the money order, plus the fee. The carrier gives the customer a receipt for the application. The money order is completed when the carrier returns to the Post Office, and a money order receipt is left in the customer's mailbox on the next delivery day. Most customers provide the carrier with a stamped, self-addressed envelope in which the completed money order is mailed to its destination. If customers prefer, the completed money orders will be returned for verification on the next delivery day.

SPECIAL SERVICES

Special services such as Certified, Registered, Express Mail, Delivery Confirmation, Signature Confirmation, and COD may be obtained from the carrier by leaving a note in the mailbox, along with the appropriate payment. The carrier will provide the services that day and leave a customer receipt in the mailbox on the next delivery day.

HOLDING MAIL

Customers who will be away for an extended time, such as a vacation, may request that their mail be held at the Post Office during their absence. Upon return, the customer asks the Post Office to resume delivery.

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UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE

Welcome to Rural Route (RR) Service

Today it is difficult to envision the isolation and loneliness that were the lot of the farmer and his family in early America. The typical farm family had no telephone, automobile, radio, or television. Farmers' only links to the outside world were the mail and the newspapers that came by mail to the nearest Post Office. Because the mail had to be picked up, this meant a trip to the Post Office, often taking a day of travel. The farmer often delayed picking up his mail for days, weeks, or even months until the trip could be combined with one for supplies, food, or equipment.

John Wanamaker was the first Postmaster General to advocate rural route (RR) delivery. Although funds were appropriated a month before he left office in 1893, subsequent Postmaster Generals postponed starting the new service. It was not until 1896 before experimental rural delivery routes began in West Virginia, with carriers working out of Post Offices in Charles Town, Halltown, and Uvilla. The West Virginia experiment with rural free delivery was launched in relative obscurity and in an atmosphere of hostility. Critics of the plan maintained that it was too impractical and expensive to have a postal carrier trudge over rutted roads and through forests to attempt mail delivery in all kinds of weather.

The farmers, on the other hand, were delighted with the new service and with the new world that was being opened up to them. After receiving free delivery for a few months, one observer said that it would take away a part of life to give up the service. Another farmer looked back on his life and estimated that in 15 years he had traveled 12,000 miles going to and from the Post Office to get his mail.

One of the by-products of rural-free delivery was the stimulation it provided to the development of the great American system of roads and highways. A prerequisite for rural delivery was good roads. After hundreds of petitions for rural delivery were turned down by the Post Office because of unserviceable and inaccessible roads, local governments spent $72 million on bridges, culverts, and other improvements. In one Indiana County, farmers themselves paid more than $2,600 to grade and gravel a road to qualify for RR service.

The impact of RR service as a cultural and social agent for millions of Americans was even more striking, and in this respect rural delivery is still a vital link between industrial and rural America.

Today there are more than 77,476 rural routes covering 3.2 million miles that serve 33 million boxes. Rural delivery no longer serves just farmers in remote areas of the country. Modern rural routes provide daily service to high-rise office buildings, shopping malls, and large apartment buildings in and around large cities.

In many rural areas, Highway Contract Routes (HCR) have been established. These routes often provide the same services as a rural route and are administered by the Postal Service to ensure compliance with the contract and with postal regulations.

RR and HCR services continue to grow, binding this great nation together, and meeting the mailing needs of rural America.

A 2010-1
PRC Docket Number

Published in Local Newspaper (The Derrick) Aug. 20, 2009

Cranberry post office to close Sept. 12

▶ Those with P.O. boxes will pick up their mail at the Seneca post office on Meadow Road.

By MATT CARROLL
Staff writer

The Cranberry post office at Route 322 and Cranberry-Rockland Road is set to close its doors Sept. 12.

Unable to reach a new agreement with its landlord and without funds to seek another building, the U.S. Postal Service will suspend its Cranberry location.

Cranberry residents will still receive rural delivery, but those with post office boxes will pick up their mail at the Seneca post office on Meadow Road.

Postal Service officials were on hand Wednesday evening to explain the transition to dozens of concerned Cranberry residents gathered at the Seneca fire hall.

"We are trying to make this as seamless as possible," said Junius Johnson, manager of post office operations for the area. "The only difference you should see is the change in your post office."

Residents who once picked up their mail at the Cranberry post office can either opt for delivery to their homes, or make the trip to Seneca, Johnson said.

Those with existing post office boxes in Cranberry will not even have to change their addresses as the boxes will be transferred to the Seneca post office.

The cost to rent a post office box had been the same at both locations.

Mail sent to both Seneca and Cranberry addresses will now arrive at the Seneca post office. The mail will be sorted separately, officials said.

Some residents — many of whom have lived in the same homes for decades — expressed concern about losing their Cranberry addresses in the future.

Johnson said the promise to keep the Cranberry addresses "is not a limited guarantee, this is how it is going to be."

See CRANBERRY, Page 8

▶ Cranberry

Continued from Page 1

Others at the meeting expressed concerns about the extended trip to pick up mail — it is 2.1 miles from the Cranberry location to the Seneca post office, Johnson said.

"There is a very large number of elderly people that this is an issue for — especially in winter time," said Larry Snow, an area resident and business owner.

Russ Tomko, postmaster in Bedford, told the crowd that the Postal Service had little choice other than to close the Cranberry location.

Postal Service officials could not come to an agreement with the landlord of the Cranberry facility to extend the lease.

"Because of our financial situation — and I'm sure most of you are aware of that — we are not replacing facilities anywhere in the country," Tomko said.

Officials said the Postal Service faces a $7 billion deficit this year alone. They said the service has to make cuts to meet the shortfall.

Because of those cuts, a replacement post office could not be opened, Tomko said.

He added, however, that the Cranberry location would have remained open if the sides could have agreed on a lease.

Tomko said the Postal Service offered the owner of the building a five-year lease for $17,500, an increase on the pervious lease. He said the owner was seeking almost double that amount.

The Cranberry post office will be suspended, but not officially closed. Officials explained that post offices can be suspended for years before they are permanently closed.

Tomko said the post office could also be reopened, but added "unless things change with our financial situation, I don't see that happening in the immediate future."

Officials said anyone who wants to change from a post office box to rural delivery should contact the Cranberry or Seneca post offices.

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NAMES/ADDRESSES/TELEPHONE NUMBERS OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO CONTACT

Esther I Staab
P.O. Box 33
Cranberry, Pa. 16319
(814)-676-1335

Deborah Master
P.O. Box 43
Cranberry. Pa. 16319
(814)-676-0223

Marilyn Brandon
P.O. Box 112
Cranberry, Pa. 16319
(814)-676-9545

Elizabeth Reed
P.O. Box 91
Cranberry, Pa. 16319

Karen Latshaw
P.O. Box 181
Cranberry, Pa. 16319
(814)-432-8859

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PRC Docket Number