

January 26, 2010

Postal Regulatory Commission
901 New York Aven NW Suite 200
Washington, DC 20268-0001

ATT: Richard Oliver-Docket PI 2010-1

Dear Postal Regulatory Commission,

Thank you for your attention to the Prairie City community.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the hardships the closing of our Post Office located in Prairie City, South Dakota, inflicts on the people of this community and to see if there is any possible way it can be reopened.

Attached to this letter are copies of a petition that was circulated which verifies there is community support for reopening the Prairie City Post Office. The closing of our Prairie City Post Office inflicts many hardships on the people of this community which is documented by the 69 signatures on these petitions.

On December 1, 2009, our Post Office in Prairie City, SD was closed by the United States Postal Service. We received written notification by mail of the pending closure on November 27, 2009. Reasons stated for the closure were safety and health issues involved in the building where the Post Office was located. A meeting was held on December 1, 2009, with Cindy Lipp, MPOO, from Rapid City, SD, in which the reasons for closure were stated. Questions were received from over 50 patrons of the Prairie City Post Office. The information we were given basically told us there was no hope of reopening our Post Office.

The Prairie City Post Office provided service to businesses, many farmers and ranchers, a church and several households in Prairie City and the surrounding community. Nine businesses—an insurance company, dirt moving business, trucking business, gift shop, automotive and farm equipment repair shop, semen sales and artificial insemination business, building construction business, two feed companies and a salvage business—all depend heavily on the Post Office. The mail service is needed by these businesses and ranchers to receive payments and mail deposits in a safe and secure manner. A mailbox at the edge of the highway does not provide the security required. A locking mailbox can be purchased for incoming mail but there is no way to secure outgoing mail. Outgoing mail includes deposits to the bank of several thousands of dollars. A Post Office is necessary to provide security for outgoing mail.

This is a rural community and the mail is a vital service that is needed by people living here. Two mail carriers brought mail in to the Prairie City Post Office and a rural mail route started out of this Post Office. We could receive prescription medicine from Hettinger, ND, in one day, which is a much needed service. As our mail is now sorted and sent out of Bison, the direct connection is lost and that service is no longer available. It now takes two or more days to receive medicine.

There were 21 boxholders in the Prairie City Post Office. The rural mail route that originated out of Prairie City services 36 households, some of which are 25 miles south of Prairie City. These people now must drive 43 miles one way to Bison to sign for and pick up packages and buy stamps. There are two other mail carriers that brought mail in to the Prairie City Post Office and delivered mail out on other routes to the west and north of Prairie City. Approximately 90 households were serviced either in the Post Office or on routes that were sorted out of Prairie City.

We can order stamps through the mail or purchase them on line (for additional fees) but there are some services that require a trip to the Post Office. Also, some do not have computers or the internet and therefore, cannot order stamps online.

We have been in contact with a representative from the real estate division of the Postal Service, John Walters, to see what the requirements are for a building, since there were issues with our current post office location. Mr. Walters stated by phone that mobile units were a possibility that could be considered and the post office might be able to assist with that. We had been told at the December 1, 2009 meeting that mobile units would not be provided or approved. We were encouraged to hear what Mr. Walters said about mobile units being a possibility.

As the building was the deciding factor in closing our Post Office, a different location is necessary. As there are no other buildings that would be suitable, a mobile unit would be required. We do have more than one location in Prairie City where a mobile unit could be placed if one was made available.

Because we live in northwestern South Dakota, it is especially hard to lose a vital service to the community. It is many miles to anywhere in this part of South Dakota. Having the services our local Post Office provided helped us manage those distances. We ask that you will consider our request to do all you can to reopen our Prairie City Post Office.

Respectfully submitted,

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