

BEFORE THE
POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20268

RECEIVED

2010 JAN 29 4:00

In the Matter of:

Steamboat Spgs CO 80487
Post Office State ZIP Code

POSTAL REGULATORY
COMMISSION
DOCKET NO. A 2010-2

Don Ciavarra, Petitioner(s)

PARTICIPANT STATEMENT

1. Petitioner(s) are appealing the Postal Service's Final Determination concerning the Sundance Plaza 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.

Statement Attached

PARTICIPANT STATEMENT

On Dec. 10, 2009 the Postal Service posted a notice in the Sundance Plaza station stating that retail services will cease after 1/15/2010 (Attachment A). I believe that the Postal Service has not followed the procedures in the USPS Handbook 101 or Title 39 USC section 404.

In a Dec 13, 2008 Steamboat Today story the Postal Service announced it's plan to consolidate the Downtown and Sundance Plaza offices into one operation (Attachment B). In a Steamboat Today story on Jul. 9, 2009 Postal official Al DeSarro again stated the plan to consolidate the two offices (Attachment C). A handout given to Steamboat Springs city officials on Jul. 29, 2009 by Leigh Hettick stated that consolidating would save \$300,000.00 per year. And that the Postal Service on Jul. 6, 2009 had applied for permission to begin the investigation to consolidate (Attachment D).

On Aug. 25, 2009 the Postal Service delivered a letter dated Aug. 12, 2009 to the post office box customers at the Sundance Plaza station. The letter included a questionnaire that did not apply to the consolidation. It also stated that the Postal Service was considering consolidation of the Sundance Plaza station, and requested comments be returned by Aug. 31, 2009 (Attachment E). On Sept. 18, 2009 I requested information from the Postal Service that would be used to make the determination to consolidate the Sundance Plaza office. I was told that this is not a discontinuance, but rather an expiration of the lease (Attachment F).

In a Sept. 27, 2009 Steamboat Today story the Postal Service stated it would only move the retail services to the Downtown office and leave the PO Boxes at Sundance (Attachment G).

The Postal Service has not posted a Proposal or a Final Determination or any documents to support their decision. There have been no public hearings. They have not considered the effect on the Community or on the Employees.

They keep using economic savings as a reason, but they do not show where they will save.

I feel that this decision is arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion and not in accordance with the law, without observance of procedure required by law and unsupported by substantial evidence on the record.

Don Ciavarra

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Don Ciavarra".

33815 County Rd 33
Steamboat Springs CO 80487

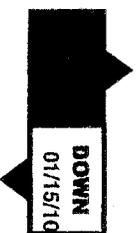
Customer Notice

Retail Services will cease at this location after 1/15/2010. PO Box service will remain at this location until further notice.

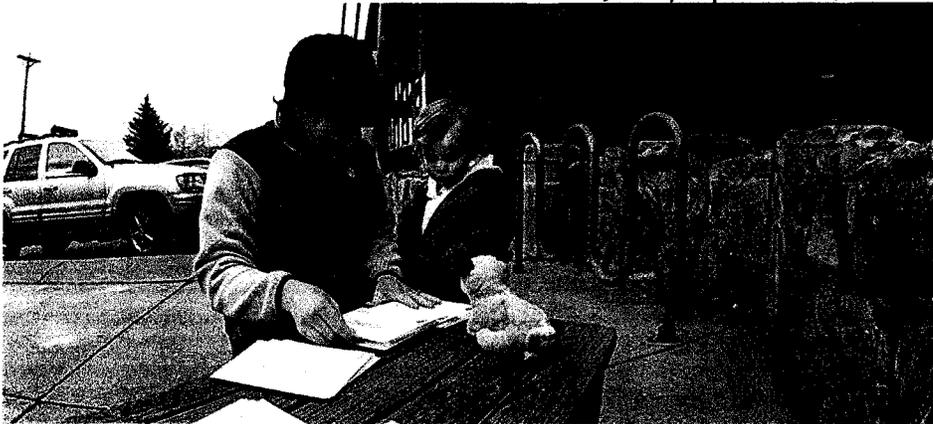
In addition to the Main Post Office, you can purchase stamps at our website www.usps.com or

by calling 1-800-stamp-24. You can also print your own shipping labels and pay for postage using Click-N-Ship at www.usps.com

We apologize for any inconvenience and thank you for your business.



Dec 13 2008
Steamboat Today Newspaper



Brooke Lightner gets a helping hand from her 2-year-old daughter, Tatum, while mailing Christmas cards from the downtown post office. The post office will move to a new location at South Lincoln Avenue and Pine Grove Road in 2011, according to development plans approved by The Steamboat Springs Planning Commission this week. Enlarge photo — Photo by John F. Russell

Post office plans move

Downtown facility to relocate to Pine Grove Road in 2011

By Brandon Gee (Contact)

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS — Developer Brian Olson said Thursday, and U.S. Postal Service officials confirmed Friday, that a deal has been struck to move Steamboat Springs' downtown post office to a future development at South Lincoln Avenue and Pine Grove Road.

"We've got the post office. It's a definite," Olson said shortly after the Steamboat Springs Planning Commission voted, 5-2, to approve development plans for a related condominium project of Olson's. "I facilitated it, and we have a contract."

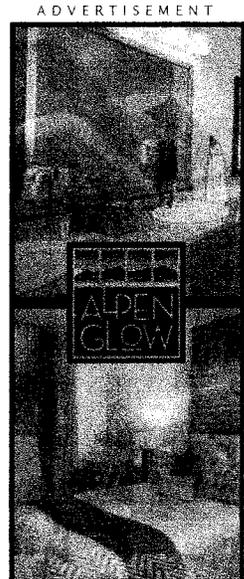
As part of his planned Trailside Village at City South development, Olson said he has agreed to deliver a one-story, stand-alone building for the post office by Aug. 30, 2011. U.S. Postal Service spokesman Al DeSarro said the contract stipulates that Olson purchase the post office's current building at Third Street and Lincoln Avenue as part of the deal. DeSarro would not disclose the financial details of the contract.

Olson said Friday that the deal essentially is a property exchange. Olson said he does not yet have any specific plans for the building at Third Street and Lincoln Avenue. Olson said he has had conversations with Old Town Hot Springs, which is located across Spring Creek from the current post office building. He also said development of the River Walk project across Lincoln Avenue could influence his plans for the property.

"I'm not necessarily in a big hurry," Olson said. "I think over the next 12 to 18 months, that will evolve, but we don't have any plans yet."

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] DeSarro said the move of the entire



operation to Trailside Village would occur in the summer of 2011.

City and Postal Service officials long have sought a new location for the post office because of traffic congestion at Third Street and Lincoln Avenue and because the current building is inefficient; it originally was designed as a bank.

"It's really a good situation for everyone," DeSarro said.

At a public meeting in March, however, some opposed the idea of the post office moving away from downtown.

Condo project approved

Approved by the Planning Commission on Thursday was the residential component of Olson's Trailside Village at City South, which includes 225 condominiums in 10 buildings and the dedication of 3.5 acres of open space to the city. The condos average just more than 1,000 square feet in size. Three business owners in the vicinity of the proposed project spoke in favor of it at Thursday's hearing. Planning commissioners Dick Curtis and Rich Levy voted against the project.

The condominium project is planned for the southwest quadrant of the intersection of South Lincoln Avenue and Pine Grove Road, behind Staples, and was considered separately from other elements of the project. Olson said he plans to submit plans next week for 120,000 square feet of commercial space — including the post office, retail and offices — in the northwest quadrant of the intersection. Also, the Planning Commission tabled consideration of Olson's associated community housing plan — which must be approved before he can begin construction — because city planners asked for more time to review it.

Last week, Olson said he planned to submit "a completely different housing plan than the city (inclusionary zoning and linkage) ordinances," which have been criticized by developers as ineffective. On Thursday, Olson said he did not wish to be more specific about his proposal.

Earlier Thursday at a board meeting of the Yampa Valley Housing Authority, board member Ed MacArthur said YVHA's new projects committee had met with members of the development community about a possible alternative to the city's inclusionary zoning and linkage ordinances. Under the alternative, developers would pay an impact fee of an agreed-upon percentage of the project and voluntarily impose a real estate transfer fee of as much as 1 percent that would be designated for affordable housing.

MacArthur asked fellow board members to consider submitting a letter to the city supporting the alternative compliance method. A special meeting was scheduled for 11:30 a.m. Dec. 18 to consider the request.

Also on Thursday, city planning commissioners tabled their consideration of a controversial revision to the Community Development Code that would prohibit the construction of "single-family dwelling units" in the industrial zone district but increase the allowable percentage of "accessory uses" such as smaller employee housing units.

— To reach Brandon Gee, call 871-4210

or e-mail bgee@steamboatpilot.com

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Jul 9 2009

Docket No A2010-2

Steamboat Today Newspaper



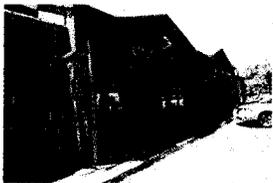
Steamboat Springs resident Heidi Pritchard drops her mail into a box at the post office branch in Sundance at Fish Creek shopping center Wednesday afternoon. A U.S. Postal Service plan states that sometime before Thanksgiving, all 2,584 boxes will be moved to the downtown post office location, but some hope for an alternative. Enlarge photo — Photo by John F. Russell

City, US Postal Service conflict about post office plans

USPS intent on moving Sundance boxes downtown; new location proposed

By Tom Ross (Contact)

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS — City officials have a July 29 lunch date with postal officials, and all signs point to a pending case of indigestion.



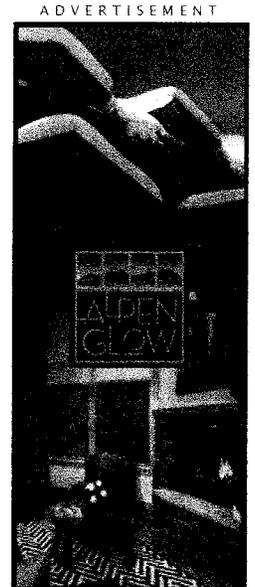
The post office branch in Sundance at Fish Creek shopping center is scheduled to be closed by the U.S. Postal Service sometime later this year. The Postal Service is wanting to move the location's P.O. Boxes to the branch at Third Street and Lincoln Avenue. Photo by John F. Russell

The U.S. Postal Service remains intent on closing down the Sundance at Fish Creek substation and transferring 2,584 postal boxes from that location to join 5,243 existing boxes at the downtown post office. Steamboat Springs City Council President Loui Antonucci made it plain how he feels about the matter.

"Moving Sundance downtown would be a disaster," Antonucci said.

Antonucci previously had informed postal service officials in writing that the city views the plan as a threat to public safety. He cited the increased congestion and automobile traffic at Third Street and Lincoln Avenue — already one of the busiest intersections in the city.

Council President Pro-tem Cari Hermacinski added Wednesday that she and her colleagues are so concerned about safety and traffic issues in the area of the downtown post office, they intend to contact Colorado's U.S. senators about the matter.



The post office branch of the U.S. Postal Service at Third Street soon may be the home to the 2,584 P.O.

[REDACTED]

"It's a prudent business decision," DeSarro said Wednesday. "This was agreed to and discussed with the city. If we've got space in the main post office, especially now, with the economy the way it is, it makes sense to use the space we have for that smaller operation."

The debate about moving the Sundance branch into the downtown facility is taking place

Boxes at the branch in Sundance at Fish Creek shopping center, according to a plan outlined by the Postal Service. Residents and Steamboat Springs City Council members are trying to come up alternatives, saying the downtown location already is too congested. Photo by John F. Russell

against the background of another plan: to have a new main post office built by a private developer near the intersection of U.S. Highway 40 and Pine Grove Road in the proposed City South commercial center.

The Postal Service called the Steamboat Pilot & Today on June 3 to say that plan was off because the development group, led by Steamboat builder and developer Brian Olson, was seeking to reopen the contract. But a day later, Gabriel Benvenuto, a postal official dealing with real estate issues, said the door remained open for the new Steamboat facility if Olson and his partner would stick to the original contract terms.

In a letter to Antonucci dated June 23, Benvenuto wrote: "Under the negotiated contract terms, Mr. Olson has certain obligations and deliverables to perform. The final decision to move forward with this project lies with the developer, Mr. Olson."

Olson said Wednesday that he and Rod Forrester are prepared to do just that.

"We have all intentions of going forward with the project," Olson said. "As it stands right now, we're here to fulfill the contract."

If the new post office gets built, the downtown location would close, and all of its P.O. Boxes would migrate south to the new facility.

Appeals allowed

For now, the Postal Service says it will move the Sundance P.O. Boxes into space within the downtown location's adjoining building, which was vacated by Coldwell Banker Silver Oak real estate offices this spring. DeSarro said the move likely would take place in late October or early November in order to avoid any conflict with the holiday mailing rush.

Coldwell Banker owner Karen Beauvais said it wasn't her company's choice to move from its space in the building owned by the Postal Service.

"They forced us out," Beauvais said. "I have a letter from them saying they wouldn't renew our lease."

Steamboat businesswoman Renee Mestan stood before City Council on Tuesday to say she had been in touch with the independent Postal Regulatory Commission, and she was told that appeals of decisions to close or consolidate any post office may be filed by the people who are served by the office.

"The Postal Service must provide adequate notice of its intention to close or consolidate any post office at least 60 days prior to the date of such closing or consolidation to person served by such office," commission spokeswoman Annie Kennedy wrote to Mestan.

In addition, any determination to close or consolidate a post office must be in writing and be made available to those it serves.

Appeals of any decision to close or consolidate must be postmarked within 30 days of the formal notification, Kennedy added.

DeSarro said Wednesday it was his impression that the commission's appeals process did not apply to consolidation of small postal substations such as Sundance and that the Postal Service could take that step autonomously.

Traffic questions

Mestan has had a P.O. Box at Sundance since 2001 and visits it six or seven times a week.

She said she doesn't think many of the other patrons at Sundance are aware of the pending change.

"I love the people at Sundance. That's the small town attitude isn't it? That's what it's all about," Mestan said. "Where are we going to park downtown?"

Mestan acknowledged that there are available cluster boxes near the entrance to her condominium development. However, she said she has moved too many times in the past five years to consider changing her mailing address every time she changes her physical address.

DeSarro said Postal Service representative Leigh Hettick would come to the July 29 meeting with city officials with several proposals to alleviate traffic concerns at the downtown post office. He hinted that the Postal Service was willing to explore some form of parcel pick-up to reduce the need for postal patrons to actually visit the downtown post office.

"We have a strong interest in customer service, and we're going to listen to city leaders," DeSarro said. "We have a lot of experience doing this with other towns and communities, and we still want peoples' business. There are things we can do to greatly help the convenience factor."

Deputy City Manager Wendy DuBord told City Council on Tuesday night that she hopes to convince the Postal Service to conduct a traffic analysis, finance and install new neighborhood cluster boxes in the city as well as build enhancements to pedestrian safety.

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Community comments

Note: The Steamboat Pilot & Today doesn't necessarily condone the comments here, nor does it review every post. Read our full policy.

aichempty
July 9, 2009 at 8:38
a.m.
> Suggest removal

Everybody needs to write to your Representative and Senators about this situation.

There's no reason for a city the size of Steamboat, with all the traffic, trouble and expense involved to postal customers, can't get funding for the Post Office to deliver the mail to homes and businesses instead of to P O Boxes.

Make it a "green" issue. I'm sure the P O can find a reason to avoid it from a financial standpoint, but as long as our government requires us to use the U S Postal Service for official business, they need to consider our needs and safety as part of the process.

goremtn
July 9, 2009 at 9:06
a.m.
> Suggest removal

The City shouldn't wait for USPS to conduct a traffic study. I know there's not "extra" money sitting around in the city's coffers, but the decision needs to include serious, current, reliable data on traffic and on the potential traffic projections. USPS looks like they have already made up their mind but the traffic impacts are potentially serious enough to warrant some data to study, because the study could really influence the discussion. It is curious that in this case the federal government has so much power and influence to shape and even escalate the traffic crises on Lincoln Ave/US40, but the dollars to pay for the fixes to the congestion are not the federal government's obligation but the city's and the county's and the developers' (esp Steamboat 700 and 360 Village). That entire street/road/highway is a federal facility, after all.

Hand out given by Leigh Hettick at meeting with City officials

Steamboat Springs Post Office Meeting

July 29 2009

Background

Main Post Office

The Main Post Office was occupied in April 1991. It has a total of 5,243 P.O. boxes. 5,121 are rented. The ground floor contains 15,258 sq. ft. The facility contains four service counters. There are 5,243 post office boxes with approx 5100 being rented.

The USPS is using 11,122 sq. ft. Interior space in the vacant side of the ground floor is 3,516 sq. ft. The second floor contains 8,771 sq. ft. of which 3,457 sq. ft. is leased. There are 3 tenants renting 620 sq. ft., 1,650 sq. ft. and 1,187 sq. ft. suites.

There are 47 dedicated customer parking spaces. The front parking lot has 39 regular parking places plus 2 handicapped spaces. At the back side of the building are 6 customer spaces. The USPS owns a parking lot located on 3rd St., behind the building and across Fish Creek Falls Rd. This lot contains 21 spaces. Six employee parking spaces are reserved at the side and back of the building. On the 3rd Street side there are 6 on-street parking spaces plus access to a large public parking lot across the street.

On June 13, 2006, the City advised the USPS in writing that "the City of Steamboat Springs would like to acquire your current property. In order to facilitate this acquisition, we propose that the USPS and the City start the process to identify a suitable and mutually agreeable site"

Sundance Plaza Station

The USPS occupied the building Sundance Plaza in December 1982. Interior space is 2,477 sq. ft. It was originally a non personnel unit, containing just post office boxes. Retail service was added later and it was converted to a classified station.

3,488 sq. ft.

Sundance Plaza has two service counters. It has a total of 2,584 P.O. boxes, approximately 2,400 are rented

The current rent is \$68,539/year. The lease expires Dec 6 2009. The latest offer to extend the lease (giving us a 10% discount) was \$91,839.04 for the first year, \$96,443.20 for the second year and \$101,252.54 for the third year.

Alternatives

Do nothing - The do nothing alternative will cost the USPS approximately \$300,000 per year in lease, transportation and personnel expenses.

MPO & Sundance Consolidation - Before the USPS could move into the new facility in 2011, it would need to purchase the building. The building developer might make the purchase. On July 9, 2009, the USPS and the City of Steamboat Springs met to discuss the consolidation matter.

Temporary Trailer on Development Site without Retail Service - The USPS has access to a modular trailer modified for P.O. box installation only. The trailer which is located in Taos NM was inspected in May 2009 and would require additional repair and modification to be suitable for use.

Procedures

The process for new facility construction or modifying an existing facility is governed by the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act - HR6407. The USPS will strictly comply with its obligations under Title IV Section 404 of the Act

Attachment D

Docket No A 2010-2

[REDACTED]
August 12, 2009

Dear Postal Customer:

Changes in consumer preference and recession-related declines in mail volume have reduced U.S. Postal Service revenues. Operation of the Postal Service is paid for by postage and fees paid by our customers. The Postal Service receives no operational subsidy from taxes. Current economic conditions require that we review all postal operations for opportunities to streamline processes and provide service more efficiently.

As the postal manager responsible for all offices in your area, I would like your opinion concerning a possible change in the way your postal service is provided. A review of the business activities of the Sundance Plaza Station revealed that the office workload has declined. This reduced workload and the fact that we have the Main Post Office at 200 Lincoln Ave just 1.3 miles away suggests that the continuation of the Sundance Plaza Station may not be warranted.

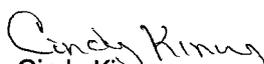
[REDACTED] located at 120 Angiers
[REDACTED]. The Postal Service is considering relocating current post office boxes to the Main Post Office. Full retail service hours at the Main Post Office are from 08:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 09:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Saturday. The lobby is open 24 hours for customer convenience.

If a change to service is implemented, post office box customers will continue to use the name Sundance Plaza and ZIP Code 80488 in their mailing address. **You will not be required to change your mailing address if you choose to continue your Post Office Box at the new location.** The Postal Service operates to serve our customers. We value your opinions during this review process. Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return with your [REDACTED] by August 24, 2009 using the pre-addressed/prepaid envelope provided.

If you have any questions, you may call Lisa Gamboa, Post Office Closing Coordinator whose telephone number is 303-853-6722.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,


Cindy Kinney
Manager, Post Office Operations
1845 Skyway Drive
Longmont, CO 80504-6262

Attachment E

Docket No A2010-2

Postal Customer Questionnaire

1. Please check the appropriate box to indicate whether you used the Sundance Plaza Station for each of the following:

Postal Services	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never
a. Buying stamps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Mailing letters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Mailing parcels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Picking up Post Office box mail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Picking up general delivery mail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Buying money orders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Obtaining special services, including Certified mail, Registered mail, Insured mail, Delivery Confirmation, or Signature Confirmation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Sending Express Mail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Buying stamp-collecting material	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other postal services:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. Entering permit mailings | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Resetting/using postage meter | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

Nonpostal Services

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. Picking up government
forms (such as tax forms) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Using for school bus stop | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Assisting senior citizens,
persons with disabilities, etc. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

If yes, please explain: _____

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| d. Using public bulletin board | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Other | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

If yes, please explain: _____

2. Do you pass another Post Office during business hours while traveling to or from work, or shopping, or for personal needs?

Yes

No

If yes, which offices: _____

3. If you previously received carrier delivery, there will be no change to your delivery service - proceed to question 4. If you previously received Post Office box service or general delivery service, complete this section. How do you think carrier route delivery service compares to your previous service?

Better

Just as Good

No Opinion

Worse

Please explain. _____

4. For which of the following do you leave your community? (Check all that apply.) Where do you go to obtain these services?

Shopping _____

Personal needs _____

Banking _____

Employment _____

Social needs _____

5. Do you currently use local businesses in the community?

Yes

No

If yes, would you continue to use them if the Post Office is discontinued?

Yes

No

Name: _____
(please print your name)

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____ Date: _____

Please add any additional comments on a separate piece of paper and attach it to this form.
Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

9-18-09

Char Ehrenshaft
Labor Relations

Char

We are trying to get the information that will be used to document the proposed request to discontinue the Sundance Plaza Station.

Handbook PD-101 says the request for discontinuance must be submitted in writing to the vice president, Delivery and Retail, for approval. This is the information that we are requesting

Thanks for your attention

Don Ciavanna

Don Ciavanna

APWU local 1337

PO Box 772193

Steamboat Spgs CO 80477

Attachment F

Docket No A2010-2

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO

Grievant/Union <u>APWU 1337</u>	Nature of Allegation <u>Consolidation of Sundance Plaza Steamboat Springs CO 80488 9-18-09</u>
Date of Request	

To: Char Ehrenshaft Title: Manager Labor Relations
 From: Don Ciavara Title: Local 1337 APWU

Subject: **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION & DOCUMENTS RELATIVE TO
PROCESSING A GRIEVANCE**

We request that the following documents and/ or witnesses be made available to us in order to properly identify whether or not a grievance does exist and, if so, their relevancy to the grievance:

- Attached {
1. Results of the Customer Questionnaire Aug 12-Sept 11 ✓
 2. Comments from Customer Questionnaire.
 3. Any data gathered that will be used to support the proposed consolidation.
 4. _____ not available
 5. All financial analysis showing savings and costs.
 6. _____

Please note this is not a discontinuance, but rather an expiration of the lease.

NOTE: Article 17, Section 3 requires the Employer to provide for review all documents, files, and other records necessary in processing a grievance. Article 31, Section 3 requires that the Employer make available for inspection by the Unions all relevant information necessary for collective bargaining or the enforcement, administration or interpretation of this Agreement. Under 8a(5) of the National Labor Relations Act it is an Unfair Labor Practice for the Employer to fail to supply relevant information for the purpose of collective bargaining. Grievance processing is an extension of the collective bargaining process.

REQUEST APPROVED

REQUEST DENIED

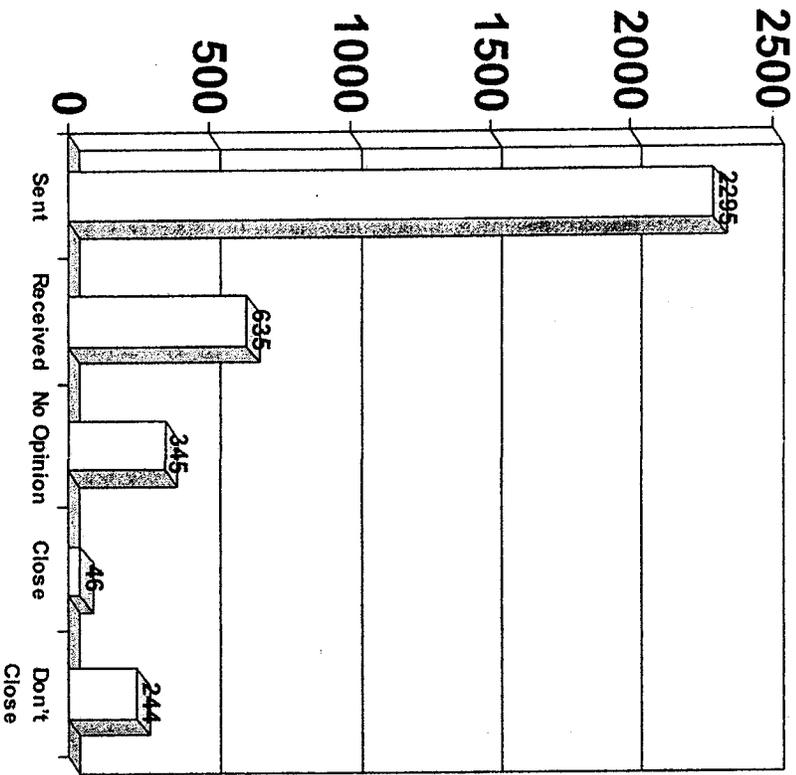
9-24-2009
(date)

Char Ehrenshaft
(signed)

JMH/A

MOCT

Customer Survey Data



Survey questionnaires were the USPS standard form from Publication 101

Survey forms went to each rented box in Sundance Station (2297)

27.6% of surveys were returned (635)

54.3% of the returned surveys had no opinion on the consolidation (345)

7.2% of the returned surveys were for consolidating Sundance Station (46)

38.4% of the returned surveys wanted Sundance Station to remain open (244)

Those with either no opinion or supporting consolidation equal 61.5%

Sept 27 2009
Steamboat Today

Postal Service won't consolidate boxes downtown

Spokesman: Sundance location could move but would remain in southern part of town



Photo by Matt Stensland

The U.S. Postal Service has decided not to consolidate all Steamboat Springs post office boxes at the downtown location, where traffic is a concern for many residents.

By Brandon Gee

Originally published September 27, 2009 at midnight, updated September 28, 2009 at 3:05 p.m.

Watch it live

Renee Mestan, a local resident protesting the U.S. Postal Service's possible closure of the Sundance at Fish Creek branch, will be on Monday's "Steamboat Today" morning show on Steamboat TV18. Tune in to Channel 18 at about 8:35 a.m. to see her interview, and check www.steamboatpilot.com later in the day to watch the segment online.

Steamboat Springs — *This story has been corrected from its original version. PostNet offers postal services such as shipping and stamp sales, but those services are at an increased price from rates charged at post office locations.*

South-side postal boxes would be preserved but retail services would move downtown under the latest plans outlined by U.S. Postal Service officials.

The Postal Service's planned closure of its branch in the Sundance at Fish Creek shopping center - and consolidation of services at the downtown office at Third Street and Lincoln Avenue - had city officials and

Attachment G

Docket No A2010-2

others sweating about the potential traffic and safety impacts at the busy location.

Under initial plans, Sundance's 2,600 boxes would have been relocated to recently vacated space in the downtown building, which already houses 5,200 postal boxes. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] it will find a location in southern Steamboat Springs for the postal boxes. DeSarro said options include finding new vacant commercial space, renegotiating a lease at Sundance for less space or installing modular units at the site of a new main post office to be built by a private developer near the intersection of U.S. Highway 40 and Pine Grove Road. DeSarro said that decision will be based on what turns out to be the best deal. The Postal Service's lease at Sundance expires in December.

"I think we're on a good course here," DeSarro said.

The Postal Service is reeling from the economic recession and people's migration to electronic forms of communication. Mail volume declined by 10 billion parcels in federal fiscal year 2008, and the Postal Service lost \$2.8 billion. The Postal Service is on track to lose another \$7 billion this federal fiscal year despite \$6 billion in cost-cutting measures.

City officials said they also are pleased with Postal Service officials' latest plans, which were outlined in a meeting between the two earlier this month.

"I thought they were very cooperative this time around," said City Council President Loui Antonucci, who guessed the city's efforts to involve Steamboat's congressional representatives were probably helpful.

Deputy City Manager Wendy DuBord said the city has consistently told the Postal Service that moving everything downtown is "absolutely unacceptable to the city."

"We don't want their financial issues to create traffic headaches and pedestrian safety issues in downtown Steamboat Springs," DuBord said. "To their credit, they heard us, and they're trying to work with us on that. We left the meeting quite happy."

Down on downtown

Businesses in Sundance, however, want to preserve the post office in that location no matter what.

"We're totally against moving it," said Marie Menk, of Annie's Home Consignments. "We get a lot of customers in here from that. We have a lot of people walking through with mail in their hands."

Mila Ballentine, manager at Mountain Cuts, said about 70 percent of her customers also visit the post office when they come to get a haircut. She said it's great that customers can go take care of their postal needs if there is a wait at Mountain Cuts, which operates on a walk-in-only basis.

"We're thinking that's not going to be really good," Ballentine said about the possible closure.

Local resident Renee Mestan said Friday that she has collected nearly 2,000 signatures on a petition to save the Sundance branch and prevent operations from moving downtown. She said she is happy that the Postal Service would preserve postal boxes in southern Steamboat but still thinks consolidating retail services downtown is unacceptable.

"We're trying to avoid downtown for obvious reasons," she said.

DeSarro said the Postal Service will take additional steps to mitigate the impact of consolidating retail services downtown, such as reworking the flow of traffic there. DeSarro said the Postal Service also will encourage residents who are not taking advantage of the cluster mail boxes in their neighborhoods to do so.

"That would also help cut down on the traffic congestion at Third and Lincoln," DeSarro said.

DeSarro also said that regional Postal Service officials are requesting that they be allowed to install an automated, self-serve machine at the downtown office that would be available at all hours. DeSarro said such machines are usually only allowed in larger cities, however.

"They're tough to get, but we're going to propose it anyway," he said.

DeSarro added that he doesn't think many Steamboat residents are aware that postal services such as shipping and stamp sales are available at PostNet, in the 1600 block of Mid Valley Drive near the Staples store in southern Steamboat. However, those services are offered at an increased price.