

**BEFORE THE
POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON DC 20268-0001**

**SIX-DAY TO FIVE-DAY STREET DELIVERY
AND RELATED SERVICE CHANGES, 2010**

Docket No. N2010-1

**WRITTEN STATEMENT OF
TIMOTHY SULLIVAN
ON BEHALF OF THE
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE**

BUFFALO FIELD HEARING

JUNE 28, 2010

My name is Tim Sullivan. I am the Postmaster for the village of Fredonia, New York, which is about 45 miles southwest of Buffalo. I appreciate the opportunity to tell the Postal Regulatory Commission about our Post Office and how, when called, we intend to help implement the service changes being planned by the Postal Service. Before doing so, I will provide some background information about my village and myself.

Fredonia is located in the town of Pomfret in Chautauqua County, the westernmost county in the state of New York. Fredonia was incorporated in 1829 and covers approximately 5.2 square miles. According to the 2000 census, Fredonia is home to approximately 10,700 residents. In 1825, Fredonia was the site of the first natural gas well in the United States. Fredonia was also the home of the first dues-paying chapter of The Grange, the national organization of American farmers that championed the cause of rural mail delivery over a century ago.

Fredonia includes a branch of the State University of New York (SUNY) system that just recently produced its first two student Fulbright scholars. The university helps to create a blended community consisting of a mix of new residents and those of us whose families have been in this area for generations.

Our level 20 Post Office has 21 employees. There are eight city routes and two rural routes that operate in Fredonia. Our Post Office serves more than 5500 delivery points, with about a four-to-one city-to-rural route ratio. There are 507 Post Office Box addresses at the Fredonia Post Office. We have 11 collection boxes in the village at 7 locations. Fredonia Post Office retail hours

are 9:00am to 5:00pm Monday-through-Friday and 9:00am to noon on Saturdays. In fiscal year 2009, we experienced a downturn but still generated almost \$819,000 in revenue.

In order to enhance convenience for our customers, postal retail operations in Fredonia are supplemented by the availability of two stamp consignee locations at which postal customers can purchase stamps: Wal-Mart and the SUNY Bookstore. In addition, stamps may be purchased in Fredonia at three automated teller machines. Fredonia has one Approved Shipper location, The Paper Factory.

I have served as Postmaster in Fredonia since August 2005. I began my postal career as a rural carrier associate in Fredonia in 1983. I eventually became a city carrier. Ten years into my postal career, I was appointed Postmaster of South Dayton NY. Five years later, I became Supervisor of Customer Services here in Fredonia. From there, I went on to serve as Postmaster in Silver Creek NY and then Derby NY before returning to Fredonia as Postmaster.

I happen to be second-generation Postal Service. Before retiring as a rural carrier here in Fredonia, my father helped to convert all of Chautauqua County's rural route box addresses to the current 911 address system. His brother, my uncle, was Postmaster in Fredonia in the 1980's. Before then, as Supervisor of Customer Service, he set up the ZIP+4 map for Fredonia.

My family's roots run deep in Fredonia. My grandfather owned and operated a corner grocery store in Fredonia until the early 1960's. My wife's

grandparents operated a produce farm on the outskirts of the village. I am a life-long Fredonian and proud to serve my village as Postmaster.

I know that the Postal Regulatory Commission is reviewing the Postal Service's plan for five-day street delivery and related service changes. That plan would eliminate Saturday mail delivery to street addresses in Fredonia (with the exception of Express Mail). Post Office boxes at our Post Office would continue to receive mail Monday through Saturday and we would continue to provide window service on Saturdays. We also would continue to honor requests that mail be postmarked at our retail windows on Saturdays. The plan also eliminates collection of mail on Saturdays from delivery points and collection boxes in Fredonia, as well as the Saturday processing of outgoing mail generated in the village.

I am aware that the Postal Service intends to implement the changes during calendar year 2011 on a date yet to be determined. I know that a change to five-day delivery is dependent upon the ongoing Congressional legislative process. Even though I am a Postmaster focused on serving the public in a nice, quiet village, I am aware that financial pressures and changes in mail volume that are causing the Postal Service to re-think the way it operates and to drastically reduce costs systemwide. Accordingly, I am not surprised that senior postal management has determined that operational and service changes are a necessary step in any plan for improving the long-term financial stability of the Postal Service. I am aware that the policy, financial and operational justification for the service changes being planned are presented in testimony submitted by

senior postal executives and other expert witnesses who will testify before the Commission in Washington DC next month. I trust that you will find their testimony informative on these issues.

We know a lot about change in Fredonia. People sometimes refer to our part of the county as the Rust Belt because of the decline in the industrial base. Over the past few decades, the closure of three local steel mills and the shutdown of several factories in Fredonia and neighboring Dunkirk have taken their toll on our community. Had the closure of Altech Specialty Steel in Dunkirk during the mid-1980's not turned my world upside-down, I might never have seriously considered a postal career. Fredonia has survived and even flourished because of the resiliency of its people. I think the same will be true for the Postal Service if management and craft employees keep an eye on the long-term best interests of the Postal Service and its customers. Change may be necessary, but if we make the most of what we have, we can continue to serve a vital role in meeting the communications and shipping needs of the public.

I am in constant contact with postal customers in Fredonia -- from the seniors who still live on my old route to the students in town for whom the mailing of a letter is a quaint experience. It is clear that the Internet provides a lot of convenience that many of us could never have imagined a few decades ago. A lot of personal and commercial transactions that used to be conducted by letter are now by personal computers and newer generations of telephones. Mailing patterns are definitely changing. We see it in Fredonia every day.

Assuming the Postal Service implements the service changes being reviewed by the Commission, I will be responsible, under the direction of the Western New York District office, for ensuring that Fredonia Post Office customers clearly understand what changes are coming, when those changes will occur, and what choices there will be for maximizing the continued use of the mail.

Five-day delivery and the other service changes will require some adjustments for many customers; minor for some and more substantial for others. I am responsible for improving customer satisfaction among people who also are my life-long neighbors. Before change is implemented, I think that education and information will go a long way to help customers adjust their personal or business routines and service expectations, even if it turns out that the change does not perfectly suit everyone's mailing and shipping needs. Experience tells me that a proven commitment to continuous service improvement is the surest way to retain postal business.

A few weeks ago, I addressed the local Rotary Club about five-day delivery. The audience included representatives from local banking, insurance, real estate and law firms, a variety of other local businesses, as well as doctors, public school and university administrators, teachers and professors. It has been my experience that customers in Fredonia seem to understand that the Postal Service faces difficult choices, and that there are no easy solutions within our grasp. I know that the Postal Service will give six months advance notice of the implementation date selected for the five-day plan. When a date is established

and a communications plan is launched, I will be responsible for ensuring that Fredonia customers – whether senior citizens on my old route, students who fill the university dormitories for most of the year, local businesses, as well as “snowbirds” who temporarily move south every year -- can transition as smoothly as possible and understand how to continue relying upon the Postal Service for their mailing and shipping needs.

When the time comes, I understand that multiple mailings to residential and business customers will explain all service changes and customer options. This will be especially important for those of my customers who do not have Internet access, especially those of my parents’ generation. Besides, it is only fitting that a mail service change of this magnitude be communicated by mail. New signs designed to inform our customers also will appear in the Fredonia Post Office lobby; modified labels on collection boxes in Fredonia will reflect the elimination of Saturday collections.

For Fredonians with Internet access, the Postal Service website “five-day delivery” at USPS.com (<http://www.usps.com/five-daydelivery>) provides planning guides and frequently asked questions with answers tailored specifically for household and commercial customers. I have already directed many business and residential customers to the website for answers to their questions and I have received positive feedback. As useful as it is, I see the website as supplementing our direct outreach to customers when the time comes. In Fredonia, television and radio broadcasts from Buffalo is as local as it gets. One local radio station broadcasts on both AM and FM with two separate formats. So

far, newspapers and television and radio broadcast news programs have proven to be useful tools in “getting the word out” about the possibility of a change to five-day delivery service. When it becomes a reality, we will coordinate with the Western New York District office to disseminate relevant information to newspapers, TV and radio to supplement our direct customer communications.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and provide this statement. I can now try to answer your questions. If I am not the right person to provide an answer, I will work with Postal Service counsel to ensure that the Commission gets a response to any outstanding questions you may have.
