

**Postal Regulatory Commission**  
Washington, D.C. 20268-0001

NOTICE OF FILING UNDER 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)

TO THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE:

Please take notice that on November 22, 2010, the Commission received a petition for review of the Postal Service's decision to close the Graves Mill Post Office, located in Graves Mill, Virginia. Attached to the petition for review are several supporting documents, including copies of the Proposal to Close and Final Determination to Close the post office. The petition for review was filed by Douglas M. Graves and is postmarked November 15, 2010.

This notice is advisory only and is being furnished so that the Postal Service may begin assembling the administrative record in advance of any formal appeal proceedings held upon the alleged (closing/consolidation) for transmittal pursuant to 39 CFR § 3001.113(a) (requiring the filing of the record within 15 days of the filing with the Commission of a petition for review). The Postal Service is required to file its administrative record no later than December 7, 2010.

  
Shoshana M. Grove  
Secretary

Date: November 23, 2010

Attachment

Douglas M. Graves  
P.O. Box 92  
Graves Mill, Virginia 22721  
E-mail: Dugmill@aol.com  
540/948-3306

November 15, 2010

RECEIVED  
2010 NOV 22 P 1:41  
POSTAL REGULATORY  
A2011-3

Ms Shoshana Grove, Secretary  
Postal Regulatory Commission  
901 New York Ave. N.W. Suite 200  
Washington, D. C. 20268-0001

**Re: Request to file an appeal regarding the “Final Determination To Close The Suspended Graves Mill, VA Post Office and Continue to Provide Rural Route Service---Docket Number 22721-copy attached**

Good Day Ms Grove:

I live within Graves Mill (Madison County), Virginia and receive my mail service, provided by the United States Postal Service, at the above Graves Mill, VA post office (cluster box) 22721. My physical *post office* above was placed within the “Emergency Suspension” class effective June 1, 2001 (See attached USPS document: Docket No 22721; Item No. 31; Pages 27 and 28). Between June 15, 2004 and August 16, 2004, the “Proposal To Close The Suspended Graves Mill, VA Post Office and Continue to Provide Rural Route Service—Docket Number 22721 was posted (see attached copy). However, due to “an error in procedure at the Madison Post Office during the posting removal procedure, the 60 day notice of the proposal will be reposted again (see attached USPS document: Docket No. 22721; Item no. 67; page 1) and it was again posted between September 4, 2007 thru November 5, 2007. To my knowledge, there has been no additional posting of documents regarding this post office until between June 30, 2010 and July 30, 2010. The postal authorities waited some 32 months later, to post the “*Final Determination to Close The Suspended Graves Mill, VA Post Office...Docket Number 22721*”. And, it has been 9 years since the Graves Mill Post Office Docket No. 22721 had been placed within Emergency Suspension status and the Final Determination to Close the post office was posted--9 years later! This totally unacceptable! This most certainly was not a timely processing and/or due process of law—by the United States Postal Service. Obviously, the USPS officials were hoping the matter would have been forgotten about and/or over-looked by the patrons that are served by the affected post office and they (the patrons) would then miss the notice of final closing, posted between June 30 and July 30, 2010. And, once they missed this posting, they would obviously not be aware of the required 30-day time period to file an appeal with the PRC.

1 The notice of the “*Final Determination to Close The Suspended Graves Mill, VA Post Office ...*  
2 *Docket Number 22721*” was posted at the Wolftown, VA and the Madison, VA post offices. The  
3 Wolftown post office is located 7 miles away while the Madison post office is located 15 miles away  
4 from the Graves Mill, VA. cluster box.. However, ***none*** of the approximately 10 families served by the  
5 affected Graves Mill, VA 22721 post office were aware of this final posting! Thus, we were not afforded  
6 the opportunity to file, a formal appeal with the PRC, within the mandated 30-day period of that posting-  
7 June 30, 2010. According to the Code of Regulations [Federal] Title 39: Postal Service; Part 241-  
8 Establishment Classification, and Discontinuance; section 241.3 –subsection (2)-Legal Requirements-  
9 line (iii) states:

10  
11 **“The written determination must be made available to persons served by the post office at**  
12 **least 60 days before the discontinuance takes effect.”**

13  
14 The document, the “*Final Determination to Close The Suspended Graves Mill, VA Post Office ...*  
15 *Docket Number 22721*” was ***not posted*** at the Graves Mill, VA 22721 cluster box or at the adjacent  
16 Graves Chapel building location so that Graves Mill, VA 22721 patrons/persons “served by the  
17 [affected] post office” could review this document and file a timely appeal with PRC during the  
18 required 30 day time frame. The USPS did not afford the persons served by this post office the  
19 opportunity to review this extremely important document and did not follow the statutory requirements  
20 and/or at the very least, did not follow the intent or spirit of this statute and that is--to make the document  
21 known to the persons served by affected post office namely, the Graves Mill, VA 22721 post office! I  
22 have interviewed the individuals/families within the confines of the Graves Mill, VA 22721 post  
23 office/cluster boxes and have confirmed that ***none*** of the individuals were aware of the posting of the  
24 document between June 30 and July 30, 2010 posted at either the Wolftown, VA or Madison, VA post  
25 office.

26  
27 Since the suspension of the Graves Mill, VA 22721 post office when its postmistress retired in  
28 June 1, 2001 and the post office was put within an emergency suspension class, we have received our  
29 mail within the Graves Chapel office from year 1995 to year 2001. Shortly thereafter, a cluster box was  
30 installed just outside of the Chapel hallway door. The Chapel is open 24 hours, 7 days a week-it is ***never***  
31 locked! The USPS authorities were well aware of this fact--(see USPS attached document: Docket No.  
32 22721; Item no. 31; page 27). Within this document Mr. John W. Herleman on June 1, 2001, clearly  
33 states, “The church that houses the office is open 24-hours so customers have 24-hour access to their  
34 P.O. Boxes at all times.” The situation, 9 years later, has not changed. We still have 24-hour access to

1 the Church/Chapel—it is open to the public—which means the postal authorities also have access to this  
2 building and they could have posted the final determination to close document within the Chapel for  
3 review or at the adjacent cluster box.  
4

5 This official mailbox (cluster box) serves as a point for us to receive mail, send outgoing mail,  
6 receive packages, and to purchase postal stamps by mail and obtain money order application requests  
7 through our postal carrier. One of the concerns expressed by my fellow patrons on a questionnaire  
8 completed at the request of the USPS authorities was that if the Graves Mill, VA 22721 post office was  
9 eventually closed, “Customers were concerned about having to travel to another post office for service.”  
10 The official reply from the United States Postal Service administration regarding this very legitimate  
11 concern was (see the USPS attached document page 2—Docket Number 22721-question number 5):.  
12 The response for the USPS officials was:  
13

14 **“Services provided at the post office will be available from the carrier, and customers will**  
15 **not have to travel to another post office for service.”**  
16

17 For all intended purposes, Graves Chapel along with the United States Postal Service cluster box,  
18 **is the Graves Mill, VA 22721 post office.** It became the official post office after our original post office  
19 structure was completely destroyed during the Federally Declared Disaster ***flood*** here on June 27, 1995.  
20 After this devastating flood, the Graves Mill, VA 22721 postmistress merely changed locations from her  
21 destroyed post office structure and moved her United States Post Office operation into Graves Chapel.  
22 So for 6 years, it was the walk-in post office facility within Graves Mill and remained as such until her  
23 retirement June 1, 2001—when also the post office was officially placed within the “Emergency  
24 Suspension” class. Shortly thereafter, the cluster boxes were installed at this same location-namely  
25 Graves Chapel. And today, the cluster boxes are still located at Graves Chapel and are still the point  
26 where we conduct the above mentioned services provided by the United States Postal Service (as noted  
27 above) and by their own admission, “**customers will not have to travel to another post office for**  
28 **service.”** So since 1995, Graves Chapel and it subsequent cluster box located directly adjacent to the  
29 side door of Graves Chapel has been the Graves Mill, VA 22721 post office—a total of 15 years!  
30 However the Postal Service administration **chose not to post the “*Final Determination to Close The***  
31 ***Suspended Graves Mill, VA Post Office...Docket Number 22721*”** at the Graves Mill, VA 22721 post  
32 office facility (the cluster box), or upon the bulletin board located just inside the door at Graves Chapel,  
33 or at the very least, they did not send a letter or notice of this extremely important final proposal to close  
34 the post office to the few remaining “persons served by the post office (Graves Mill, VA 22721)”. They

1 chose to post this notice at two other post offices, one 7 miles away and the other, 13 miles away. Why  
2 is it necessary that we travel from our post office location (cluster box and Graves Chapel) for  
3 information and/or “service” regarding the proposed closure of our Graves Mill, VA 22721 post office  
4 when postal officials have said that “**customers will not have to travel to another post office...?**” And  
5 especially since it has been 32 months since the last activity and/or notice of some action was to be  
6 taken regarding the closing of the Graves Mill, VA post office!

7  
8 Please note the attached photographs showing the Graves Mill, VA 22721 post office facility  
9 (Graves Chapel and the adjacent cluster box). These photographs serve to highlight the fact that the  
10 notice regarding the “*Final Determination to Close The Suspended Graves Mill, VA Post*  
11 *Office...Docket Number 22721*” **should have** been posted on the cluster box which is out-of-the weather  
12 or, on the adjacent door **or** the interior of Graves Chapel within the hallway where there is readily  
13 available a bulletin board. The USPS is paying a monthly fee to the Chapel for having the cluster box  
14 located there so why didn’t the USPS officials use the facility to post the final closing notice? Any of  
15 these locations would have allowed the persons served by this post office to be made aware of the final  
16 proposal to close the Graves Mill, VA 2271 post office.

17  
18  
19 **The below photographs (page 5) represent the following:**  
20

- 21 • Photo #1-Graves Chapel—the Graves Mill, VA present post office location which has been the  
22 location for 15 years; and also showing the location of the cluster box.
- 23  
24 • Photo #2- The United States Postal Service Cluster box adjacent to the never locked door of  
25 Graves Chapel leading to the interior where the notice could have been posted as well  
26
- 27 • Photo #3-The cluster box showing the roof over-hang and the fact that the cluster box is out of  
28 the weather  
29
- 30 • Photo #4- The cluster box showing that it is used to post items due to the used tape, etc already  
31 on its side. **The notice should have been posted here** for it is out of the weather and the  
32 affected persons would have been made aware of the final closing notice of their post office  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
7  
9  
11  
13  
15  
17  
19  
21  
23  
25  
27  
29  
31  
33  
35  
37  
39  
40  
41  
42  
44  
46  
48  
50  
52  
54  
56  
58  
60  
62  
64  
66  
68  
70  
72  
74  
76  
78  
79  
80  
81  
82  
83  
84  
85  
86

Photo #1-  
Graves  
Chapel—the  
Graves Mill,  
VA present  
post office  
location for 15  
years and  
showing the  
location of the  
cluster box



Photo #2-The United States Postal Service Cluster box adjacent to the never locked door of Graves Chapel leading to the interior where the notice could have been posted

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44



Overhang-  
cluster box is  
out of the  
weather

Photo #3-The cluster box showing the roof over-hang and the fact that the cluster box is *out of the weather*-safe to post documents



Photo #4- The cluster box--showing that it is used to post items due to the used tape, etc already on its side. The notice to close the Graves Mill, VA 22721 post office ***should have been*** posted here so that the notice would have been **“made available to persons served by the post office”**

1 I personally have been opposed to the closing of the Graves Mill, VA 22721 post office since the  
2 first indication the United States Postal Service hinted at a plan to close the post office, in year 2001. As  
3 the closing process progressed, I responded with correspondence to the USPS officials directly or to an  
4 elected governmental official noting my opposition. The public record clearly documents this fact.  
5 However if you will note, I did not respond to the posting of the “*Final Determination to Close The*  
6 *Suspended Graves Mill, VA Post Office...Docket Number 22721*”. Had I been aware of the June 30-July  
7 30, 2010 posting of the final closing notice for the Graves Mill, VA 22721 post office, I would have  
8 most definitely filed a timely appeal with the PRC and possibly others would have appealed as well.  
9 However I, along with the other individuals served by the Graves Mill, VA 22721 post office were not  
10 aware of this final document posting of this document which explains the appeal process with PRC!

11  
12 I believe the requirement or *expectation* for the individuals served by the affected post office,  
13 namely the Graves Mill, VA 22721 post office, to inspect one or two other post office buildings  
14 (Madison, VA 22727 and/or Wolfstown, VA 22748) **each and every month for almost three years (32**  
15 **months)** to determine if the “*Final Determination To Close The Suspended Graves Mill, VA Post*  
16 *Office....docket number22721*” has been posted so that they can file a formal appeal--is completely  
17 unrealistic! Additionally, why was the notice regarding the “*Final Determination To Close The*  
18 *Suspended Graves Mill, VA Post Office....docket number22721*” not posted at the location *most served*  
19 by the individuals of the effected post office?

20  
21 Additionally, the USPS officials chose to post this document in July 2010, probably the most  
22 frequently used month for individuals to vacation—thus, there is more likelihood that the persons served  
23 by this post office would have been out of town and not been able to see the posting of this document.  
24 Plus, July has the Independence Day holiday—another closed day that the document cannot be viewed!  
25 So the USPS officials took advantage of at least two factors thereby reducing the likelihood of affected  
26 persons seeing this document thus negating there opportunity to file a formal appeal with the PRC prior  
27 to the USPS formally closing the Graves Mill, VA 22721 post office. Additionally perhaps, they  
28 believed that if the closing process was dragged out (lasting 9 years), that the objecting individuals to  
29 this closing, would lose interest and would over-look the final posting of the notice to close the post  
30 office. If the USPS officials were genuinely interested with following the statutory requirements and/or  
31 the true spirit and intent of the law, they would have simply placed a notice within the post office boxes  
32 of the few remaining postal patrons, at the affected post office cluster box location, notifying them of the  
33 posting of this document and that it was available for their review.

1 I have evidence to contradict at least one of the allegations made within the very first USPS  
2 document namely, the “Notice Of Post Office Suspension” document (see the attached document--  
3 Docket No. 22721; item no- 31; page 27) dated June 1, 2001. Thus in my opinion, the entire process is  
4 flawed from the very onset of this document in June of 2001. The USPS did not consider all the factors  
5 relevant to this suspension and subsequent closing situation; for they chose to only include and accept  
6 information which supported their intent namely, to close the Graves Mill, Virginia Post Office—  
7 Docket 22721. How can they support their alleged facts and conclusion, when they did not consider and  
8 report the facts which were contradictory to their intended purpose? Thus I believe the USPS did not  
9 follow procedures, required of them, by not considering and reporting all the facts within this entire  
10 situation and at the very last step within the entire 9 year long process, they didn’t make the effort to  
11 send out a notice to the approximately 10 families effected by the “*Final Determination To Close The*  
12 *Suspended Graves Mill, VA Post Office....docket number22721*”-- for they failed to adequately notify all  
13 of the effected patrons served by this post office.

14  
15 Since the very first document filed by the USPS is flawed, the entire process should be suspect  
16 and the entire 9 year closing process should be voided. The USPS officials should be reprimanded and  
17 be required to initiate the process again, *should they* wish to do so. Or at the very least, I request that the  
18 PRC require the USPS authorities to provide a second posting of the “*Final Determination To Close The*  
19 *Suspended Graves Mill, VA Post Office....docket 22721*” (as the USPS did regarding the 2004 posting,  
20 and again in year 2007 the “*Proposal To Close The Suspended Graves Mill, VA Post Office...*”). And,  
21 the document should be posted at the cluster box located at Graves Chapel, Graves Mill, VA 22721 for  
22 all of its patrons to inspect so that they can make an appeal to the PRC should they wish to do so. Or at  
23 the very least, the United States Postal Service should mail a letter to each individual/family  
24 (approximately 10) assigned to this cluster box and provide them with the location where this document  
25 can be viewed and that they have 30 days to compile and submit an appeal to the PRC.

26  
27 I respectfully request that the Postal Regulatory Commission intervene with their statutory  
28 authority and allow me, along with potentially others, to file a formal appeal with the PRC regarding the  
29 closing of the Graves Mill, VA 22721 post office-Docket Number 22721.

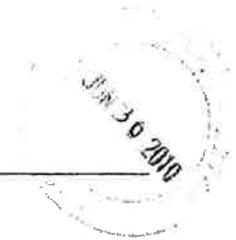
30 Thank you very much and I very much look forward to your response.

31  
32 Respectfully submitted,

33  
34 

35  
36 Douglas M. Graves

DATE OF POSTING: \_\_\_\_\_



DATE OF REMOVAL: \_\_\_\_\_



FINAL DETERMINATION TO CLOSE  
THE SUSPENDED  
GRAVES MILL, VA POST OFFICE  
AND CONTINUE TO PROVIDE  
RURAL ROUTE SERVICE

DOCKET NUMBER 22721

-1-

## I. RESPONSIVENESS TO COMMUNITY POSTAL NEEDS

The Postal Service has determined to close the suspended Graves Mill, VA Post Office and provide delivery and retail services by a rural route administered by the Madison, VA Post Office, located 13 miles away. Customers will have the option of service to cluster box units (CBUs) or roadside mailboxes installed by customers on the carrier's line of travel.

CBUs are secure free-standing units of individually locked mail compartments installed and maintained by the Postal Service at no cost to the customer. These units have been placed in the public right-of-way on the carrier's line of travel. Parcel lockers were also installed for customer convenience.

The postmaster retired on June 1, 2001. The noncareer employee from the local office declined to serve as the temporary officer-in-charge (OIC). The Postal Service was unable to find a qualified employee available and willing to staff the office; therefore service was suspended concurrent with the postmasters retirement.

The Graves Mill Post Office, an EAS-C level, provided service 24 hours a week from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday through Saturday to 15 post office box and 2 general delivery customers. Retail services included the sale of stamps, stamped paper, and money orders; special services such as registered mail, certified, insured, COD, and Express Mail; and the acceptance and dispatch of all classes of mail. Office receipts for the last three years were: \$3,451.68 (11 revenue units) in FY-1998; \$4,346.97 (14 revenue units) in FY-1999; and \$3,985.96 (12 revenue units) in FY2000. There were no permit mailers or postage meter customers.

Since the suspension of service, customers have received delivery and retail services from rural route delivery emanating from the Madison Post Office, an EAS-18 level office, located 13 miles away. Window service hours at Madison are from 8 a.m. to 4:30p.m., Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 12 noon on Saturday. There are approximately 350 post office boxes available.

Retail service is also available at the Wolfstown Post Office, an EAS-11 level office, located approximately six miles away. Window service hours at Wolfstown are from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 1:30 to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday and 8 to 11 a.m. on Saturday. There are approximately 50 post office boxes available.

On October 18, 2001 representatives from the Postal Service were available at Graves Mill to answer questions and provide information to customers. Thirty-three customers attended the meeting.

Congressional inquiries were received on November 15, 2001, December 28, 2001, March 6, 2002, March 14, 2002, August 26, 2004 and August 4, 2006.

A petition supporting the retention of the Graves Mill Post Office was received on January 24, 2002 with 134 signatures.

On November 21, 2003 questionnaires were distributed to delivery customers of the Graves Mill Post Office. Questionnaires were also available over the counter for retail customers at Wolfstown and Madison. Twenty-one questionnaires were returned. Eight responses were unfavorable and thirteen expressed no opinion regarding the proposed alternate service.

The following postal concerns were expressed on the returned questionnaires, at the community meeting, from customer letters, on the petition, and from the congressional inquiries:

-2-

1. **Concern:** Customers were concerned about obtaining accountable mail and large parcels.

**Response:** If the customer lives less than one-half mile from the line of travel, the carrier will attempt delivery of accountable items and large parcels to the customer's residence. If the customer lives over one-half mile away or is not home when delivery is attempted, a notice will be left in the mailbox. Large parcels will be left outside the mailbox, in the parcel lockers or at a location designated by the customer (if authorized by the customer), or a notice will be left in the mailbox. Attempted delivery items will be taken back to the Madison Post Office. Customers may pick up the item at the post office, request redelivery on another day or authorize delivery to another party.

2. **Concern:** Customers expressed concern about collection of outgoing mail.

**Response:** Collection of mail will be made by the carrier when serving the route. The customer should raise the flag on the mailbox to alert the carrier that outgoing mail is to be collected from the mailbox.

3. **Concern:** Customers were concerned about senior citizens.

**Response:** Carrier service is beneficial to many senior citizens and those who face special challenges because the carrier can provide delivery and retail services to roadside mailboxes. Customers do not have to make a special trip to the post office for service. Special provisions are made for hardship cases or special customer needs. To request an exception for hardship delivery, customers may contact the Madison Postmaster for more information.

4. **Concern:** Customers said they would miss the special attention and assistance provided by the personnel at the Graves Mill Post Office.

**Response:** Courteous and helpful service will be provided by personnel at the Madison and Wolfstown Post Offices and from the carrier. Special assistance will be provided as needed.

5. **Concern:** Customers were concerned about having to travel to another post office for service.

**Response:** Services provided at the post office will be available from the carrier, and customers will not have to travel to another post office for service. Most transactions do not require meeting the carrier at the mailbox. Stamps by Mail and Money Order Application forms are available for customer convenience.

6. **Concern:** Customers were concerned that there was no qualified employee to staff the office.

**Response:** The Postal Service canvassed the immediate area, but unfortunately found no qualified employee available and willing to staff the office.

7. **Concern:** Customers were concerned about a change of address.

**Response:** Customers will be assigned a carrier route address. The new address will continue to use the community name. However, the ZIP Code will change to 22727. Mail will be forwarded in accordance with postal regulations, and change of address forms are available from the Postal Service to assist customers in notifying correspondents of the change.

-3-

8. **Concern:** Customers expressed concern for those customers with disabilities who are not able to go to a post office to pick up their mail.

**Response:** Customers are not required to travel to another post office to receive mail or obtain retail services. These services will be provided by the carrier to a roadside mailbox located close to customers' residences. In hardship cases, delivery can be made to the home of a customer. Changes in the type of delivery are considered where service by existing methods would impose an extreme physical hardship for an individual customer. Any request for a change in delivery method must be submitted in writing to the Madison Postmaster.

9. **Concern:** Customers asked why their post office was being discontinued while others were retained.

**Response:** Post offices are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. When there is an emergency suspension in a small office, it is customary to conduct a study of the business activity and investigate the feasibility of providing service by alternate means.

10. **Concern:** Customers stated the Graves Mill Post Office had been closed without going through the formal discontinuance procedure.

**Response:** Operation of the Graves Mill Post Office was suspended because of an emergency but it has not been officially discontinued. An emergency suspension is a temporary change, not a permanent closing of the Graves Mill Post Office. A community meeting was held on October 18, 2001, and questionnaires were sent to the Graves Mill community on November 21, 2003. The proposal to close the Graves Mill Post Office was posted for the 60-day mandatory posting period from September 4, 2007 to November 5, 2007. Regulations require the posting of a final determination to close a post office, which informs customers on how to appeal that determination to the Postal Regulatory Commission.

11. **Concern:** Customers were concerned about mail security.

**Response:** Verification with the Postal Inspection Service revealed no recent reports of mail theft or vandalism in the area. Customers may place a lock on their mailboxes. The mailbox must have a slot large enough to accommodate the customer's normal daily mail volume. The Postal Service does not open mailboxes which are locked and does not accept keys for this purpose. Customers also have the option of delivery to CBU's.

12. **Concern:** Customers were concerned about obtaining services from the carrier.

**Response:** Retail services provided at the post office are available from the carrier. Most transactions do not require meeting the carrier at the mailbox. Stamps by Mail and Money Order Application forms are available for customer convenience. Listed below are some services available from the carrier and how to obtain them.

### **MAILING PACKAGES**

Carriers will accept packages at the mailbox without a customer being present, provided the package is under 13 ounces and the postage is fully prepaid. Just 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 US 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 can be returned for verification on the next delivery day.

**SPECIAL SERVICES**

Special services such as certified, registered, Express Mail, 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.

**Some advantages to the final determination are:**

1. Carrier delivery service is beneficial to some senior citizens, the handicapped, and working people since customers will no longer need to travel to the post office to pick up their mail.
2. The carrier provides retail services, alleviating the need to go to the post office. Stamps by Mail order forms are provided for customer convenience.
3. Customers opting for carrier service will have 24-hour access to their mail.
4. A savings for the Postal Service, which contributes in the long run to stable postage rates and savings for customers.
5. Customers opting for carrier service will no longer have to pay post office box fees.
6. Saves time and energy for customers who drive to the post office to pick up mail.

**Some disadvantages to the final determination are:**

1. The loss of a retail outlet in the community and a postmaster position in the community.

-5-

2. Meeting the carrier at the mailbox to transact business.
3. A change in mailing address. The community name will continue to be used in the new address. However, a carrier route address will be assigned, and the ZIP Code will change to 22727.

The proposal to close the Graves Mill Post Office was posted with an invitation for public comment at the Madison and Wolfstown Post Offices from September 4, 2007 through November 5, 2007. No comments were received.

Taking all available information into consideration, the Postal Service concludes this final determination will provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services to the community.

## II. EFFECT ON COMMUNITY

Graves Mill is an unincorporated rural community located in Madison County. The community is administered politically by the Madison County Board of Supervisors. Police protection is provided by the Madison County Sheriff's Department. Fire protection is provided by the Madison Volunteer Fire Department. The community is comprised of retired people, farmers, and those who commute to work at nearby communities and work in local businesses.

The Graves Episcopal Church is located in the community. Businesses include: Valley Software Services, Lewis Surveying Inc., Old Mill Bed and Breakfast, Mill Valley BBQ, several small in home businesses and several farms. Residents travel to nearby communities for other supplies and services.

Nonpostal services provided at the Graves Mill Post Office will be available at the Madison and Wolfstown Post Offices. Government forms normally provided by the post office will also be available at the Madison and Wolfstown Post Offices or by contacting your local government agency.

The following nonpostal concerns were expressed on the returned questionnaires, at the community meeting, from customer letters, on the petition and from the congressional inquiries:

1. **Concern:** Customers were concerned about the loss of a gathering place and an information center.

**Response:** Residents may continue to meet informally, socialize, and share information at the other businesses, church and residences in town.

2. **Concern:** Customers expressed concern for loss of community identity.

**Response:** A community's identity derives from the interest and vitality of its residents and their use of its name. The Postal Service is helping to preserve community identity by continuing the use of the Graves Mill name in addresses. However, to ensure effective and regular service, the ZIP Code will change to 22727.

Based on information the Postal Service obtained, it was determined that there has been minimal growth in the area in recent years. Carrier service is expected to be able to handle any future growth in the community.

-6-

Based on information obtained in the course of this discontinuance study, the Postal Service concludes this final determination will not adversely affect the community. Carrier service has been in effect since the suspension of the Graves Mill Post Office on June 1, 2001.

### III. EFFECT ON EMPLOYEES

The postmaster retired on June 1, 2001. The noncareer postmaster relief (PMR) was separated from the Postal Service when the office was suspended. No other postal employee will be adversely affected.

### IV. ECONOMIC SAVINGS

The Postal Service estimates annual savings of \$16,826.00 with a breakdown as follows:

Postmaster's Salary (EAS-C, Minimum)	\$12,454.00
Fringe Benefits @33.5%	4,172.00
Rental Costs, Excluding Utilities	+ 1,200.00
Total Annual Costs	\$17,826.00
Less Cost of Replacement Service	-1,000.00
Total Annual Savings	\$16,826.00

A one-time expense of \$1,000.00 was incurred for installation of CBUs and parcel lockers,

### V. OTHER FACTORS

The Postal Service has identified no other factors for consideration.

### VI. SUMMARY

The Postal Service has determined to close the suspended Graves Mill Post Office and provide delivery and retail services by a rural route administered by the Madison Post Office, located 13 miles away.

The postmaster retired on June 1, 2001. Operations were suspended at that time due to a lack of qualified personnel to staff the office. The noncareer PMR did not want to staff the office and was separated from the Postal Service. No other employee was adversely affected.

The Graves Mill Post Office provided 24 hours of window service per week to 17 customers. There were no permit mailers or postage meter customers.

Carrier service will continue to provide effective and regular service to the community. There will no longer be a retail outlet in the community. However, delivery and retail services will be available from the carrier, alleviating the need to travel to a post office for service. Customers opting for carrier delivery will have 24-hour access to their mail. To help preserve community identity, the community name will be retained in the mailing address. However, the ZIP Code will change to 22727. The Postal Service will save an estimated \$16,826.00 annually. A disadvantage to some may be in meeting the carrier to transact business. However, it is not necessary to be present to conduct most postal transactions.

-7-

Taking all available information into consideration, the Postal Service has determined that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages and this final determination is warranted.

**VII. NOTICES**

- A. **Support Materials.** Copies of all materials upon which this final determination is based are available for public inspection at the Madison and Wolfstown Post Offices during normal office hours.
  
- B. **Appeal Rights.** This final determination to close the suspended Graves Mill Post Office may be appealed by any person served by that office to the Postal Regulatory Commission at 901 New York Avenue NW, Suite 200, Washington DC 20268-0001. Appeals must be received by the Commission within 30 days of the date this final determination, is posted. If an appeal is filed, copies of appeal documents prepared by the Postal Regulatory Commission or the parties to the appeal will be made available for public inspection at the Madison and Wolfstown Post Offices during normal office hours.



Dean J. Granholm  
Vice President  
Delivery and Post Office Operations

5/19/10  
Date

Notice of Post Office Emergency Suspension

Area: Capital Metro

District: Northern Virginia

Name of Suspended Office: Graves Mill, VA

ZIP Code: 22721-9998

Congressional District: Seventh District, VA (Eric Cantor)

County: Madison

EAS Grade Level: EAS-53

Finance Number: 51-3738

Hours of Service: Mon - Sat 0900 to 1300 (Note: The church that houses the office is open 24-hours so customers have 24-hour access to their P.O. boxes at all times.)

Effective Date of Suspension: June 1, 2001 (month-to-month lease with Episcopal Diocese of Richmond for space in the church; current rate: \$100.00)

Specific Reasons for Suspension: The Postmaster retired as of June 1, 2001. The office is remotely located and there are no OIC candidates for part-time offices. There are no employees in the office other than a PMR, and the PMR has indicated that she has no interest in running the office or remaining on as the PMR.

Effect on Employees: Current Postmaster has retired. PMR has indicated an unwillingness to continue to operate the office in the absence of "her" postmaster. There are no other employees in this office.

<u>Number of Customers:</u>	<u>General Delivery:</u> 17
	<u>Post Office Boxes:</u> 0
	<u>Rural Routes:</u> 0
	<u>Highway Contract Routes:</u> 0
	<u>Intermediate Rural Routes:</u> 0
	<u>Intermediate HCRs:</u> 0
	<u>Total:</u> 17

Alternate Service Provided By: Service to the community has always been provided by a rural route from the Madison Post Office; this service will not be impacted by the suspension of service at Graves Mills. The Postmaster at Graves Mills established an informal box delivery system for Graves Mills general delivery customers. That service is very similar in nature to a CBU, and service to these boxes will be continued by the rural carrier who serves the area.

Accountable items that will not fit into the box will be left with the Postmaster at Wolftown, approximately 4.8 miles from the Graves Mill location. The Wolftown office will provide retail service to Graves Mill customers. The Graves Mill location is at the end of a state-maintained highway and residents must pass the Wolftown office in order to get to Graves Mill. There is no other way to drive into the community.

Nearest Post Office: Wolftown, VA 22748-9998

Miles Away: 4.8 7

Hours of Service: Mon - Fri 0800 to 1300 and 1400 to 1750; Sat 0800-1100

DOCKET NO. 22721  
ITEM NO. 31  
PAGE 28

*Notice of Post Office Emergency Suspension — Graves Mill, VA 22721-9998*  
*Page 2 of 2*

PO Boxes Available for Rent: 69 (Note: No post office box rentals are anticipated as a result of this action.)

Plan of Action: The post office will be suspended at COB Friday, June 1, 2001. The customers have been notified that in the interim their mail will be available for delivery at the Wolfstown office. The interior of the Graves Mill Post Office will be modified to allow access for the rural carrier to the post office boxes. When completed, the rural carrier who services the area will effect delivery to the post office boxes at the current location. The community consists of 17 customers. All will be apprised of the plans and the effective dates for the implementation of any plan which is put into place. The Facilities Office will make the necessary notification to the lessor and arrange for changes to the existing lease so as to allow the rural carrier to have access to the facility. Winchester maintenance staff will pack the office and its equipment and transport it to Winchester for disposition. The District Accounting Office closed out the financial accountability on June 1. The stamp stock and retail items were transferred to Winchester for storage until a final determination is made on the status of the office. The postage meter and credit card machines were registered out of the office to the proper locations. The scanning equipment was transported to Winchester for storage. The IRT was also sent to Winchester for storage. The District Accounting Office took the account book (cash book) back to the District office upon completion of the closeout. The location will be "de-postalized" by COB Friday, June 8, 2001.

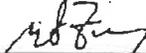
Prepared By: John W. Herleman

Date: June 1, 2001

Title: Post Office Discontinuance Coordinator

Telephone Number: 540-662-1383

Fax Number: 540-678-4899

Approved By: 

Michael S. Furey, District Manager, Customer Service & Sales

Date: June 1, 2001

District: Northern Virginia

DOCKET NO. 22721  
ITEM NO. 67  
PAGE 1



**MEMO TO THE RECORD  
DOCKET NUMBER 22721  
August 17, 2007**

A 60 day proposal to close the suspended Graves Mill Post office was posted for comments at the Madison and Wolftown Post Offices from May 25, 2007 to July 25, 2007

Due to an error in procedure at the Madison Post Office during the posting removal procedure, the 60 day notice of the proposal will be reposted again.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dennis E. Voorhees".

**Dennis E. Voorhees**

**Post Office Review Coordinator**

DATE OF POSTING: 6/15/04

DATE OF REMOVAL: 8/16/04

9/4/2007 - 11/5/2007  
60 D.A. Postage  
Been "Re-Posted"  
Due to procedural  
error @ Madison P.O.

PROPOSAL TO CLOSE  
THE SUSPENDED  
GRAVES MILL, VA POST OFFICE  
AND CONTINUE TO PROVIDE  
RURAL ROUTE SERVICE

DOCKET NUMBER 22721

## I. RESPONSIVENESS TO COMMUNITY POSTAL NEEDS

The Postal Service is proposing to close the suspended Graves Mill, VA Post Office and provide delivery and retail services by a rural route administered by the Madison Post Office, located 13 miles away. Customers will have the option of service to Cluster Box Units (CBUs) or roadside mailboxes installed by customers on the carrier's line of travel. Retail Services can also be obtained by the Wolfstown Post Office which is 6.2 miles away.

CBUs are secure free-standing units of individually locked mail compartments installed and maintained by the Postal Service at no cost to the customer. These units have been installed and are in use along the carrier's line of travel.

The Graves Mill Postmaster retired on June 1, 2001. There were no currently qualified candidates who indicated a willingness to assume the operation of the office on its regular schedule. The office was emergency suspended at close of business on June 1, 2001. A workload analysis indicated the office had declined from an EAS-C to an EAS-A, and hours would be reduced to 12 hours a week. Postmaster salary level and office service hours are determined by a workload analysis which includes the number of deliveries and revenue.

The Graves Mill Post Office, an EAS-C level office, provided service 24 hours a week from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday to 15 Post Office box and 2 general delivery customers. Retail services included the sale of stamps, stamped paper, and money orders; special services such as Registered, Certified, Insured, Delivery Confirmation, Signature Confirmation, COD, and Express Mail; and the acceptance and dispatch of all classes of mail. Office receipts for the last three years were: \$3,451.68 (11 revenue units) in FY 1998; \$4,346.97 (14 revenue units) in FY 1999; and \$3,985.96 (12 revenue units) in FY 2000. There are no permit mailers or postage meter customers. A survey of the daily delivered pieces of mail delivered was conducted. It showed that an average of 63 pieces of mail is delivered each day.

Since the suspension of service, customers have received delivery and retail services from rural delivery emanating from the Madison Post Office, an EAS-18 level office. Window service hours at Madison are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Saturday. There are 359 Post Office boxes available.

In addition, window service hours are available at Wolfstown. Their hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 1:30 to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. on Saturday. There are 55 Post Office boxes available.

On October 18, 2001, representatives from the Postal Service were available at the Graves Episcopal Church to answer questions and provide information to customers. Thirty three customers attended the meeting.

On November 21, 2003, eighteen questionnaires were distributed to delivery customers of the Graves Mill Post Office. Questionnaires were also available at the retail units of the Wolfstown and Madison Post Offices. Twenty one questionnaires were returned. 0 responses were favorable, eight were unfavorable, and 13 expressed no opinion regarding the proposed alternate service.

A petition supporting the retention of the Graves Mill Post Office was received on January 24, 2002 with 134 signatures.

Congressional inquiries were received on November 15, 2001, December 28, 2001, March 6, 2002, March 14, 2002, May 8, 2002, August 26, 2004 and August 4, 2006.

The following postal concerns were expressed on the returned questionnaires, at the community meeting, from customer letters, on the 1 petition, and from the seven congressional inquiries:

-2-

**Concern:** Customers were concerned about obtaining accountable mail and large parcels.

**Response:** If the customer lives less than one-half mile from the line of travel, the carrier will attempt delivery of accountable items and large parcels to the customer's residence. If the customer lives over one-half mile away or is not home when delivery is attempted, a notice will be left in the mailbox. Large parcels will be left outside the mailbox or at a location designated by the customer (if authorized by the customer), or a notice will be left in the mailbox. Attempted delivery items will be taken back to the Madison Post Office. Customers may pick up the item at the post office, request redelivery on another day or authorize delivery to another party.

**Concern:** Customers expressed concern about collection of outgoing mail. They also stated that it is difficult to insert odd sized pieces in the CBU collection compartment and inquired concerning the possibility of installing a collection box.

**Response:** Collection of mail will be made by the carrier when serving the route. The CBU has a collection box for the deposit of outgoing mail. A collection volume survey was conducted from September 16, 2006 to September 21, 2006 of the outgoing collection mail collected from the CBU collection slot. It disclosed that it generated an average of only four pieces per day which does not meet the minimum volume requirements to justify a collection box. In addition, customers can install rural style boxes along the current line of travel. Larger items can be placed in these boxes. The flag on the box is raised to indicate to the carrier that collection mail is available for pick up.

**Concern:** Customers were concerned about obtaining services from the carrier.

**Response:** Retail services provided at the post office are available from the carrier. Most transactions do not require meeting the carrier at the mailbox. Stamps by Mail and Money Order Application forms are available for customer convenience. Listed below are some services available from the carrier and how to obtain them.

#### **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 US 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

-3-

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 C.O.D. 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.

**Concern:** One customer was concerned about senior citizens.

**Response:** Carrier service is beneficial to many senior citizens and those who face special challenges because the carrier can provide delivery and retail services to roadside mailboxes or CBUs. Customers do not have to make a special trip to the post office for service. Special provisions are made for hardship cases or special customer needs. To request an exception for hardship delivery, customers may contact the Madison postmaster for more information.

**Concern:** Customers said they would miss the special attention and assistance provided by the personnel at the Graves Mill Post Office.

**Response:** Courteous and helpful service will be provided by personnel at the Madison and Wolftown Post Offices and from the carrier. Special assistance will be provided as needed.

**Concern:** No individual to answer postal questions.

**Response:** Customers will be able to call any local Post Office to obtain information about postage rates or services. In addition, customers can call the Consumer Answer line at 1-800 ASK-USPS.

**Concern:** Customer concern about the distance to the Wolftown Post Office.

**Response:** The distance from the Graves Mill Post Office to the Wolftown Post Office is 6.2 miles. It should also be noted that there are no stores, banks or schools located in Graves Mill. Residents have to travel to nearby communities to obtain supplies and services. The distance from State Route 230, which all residents must use, to the Wolftown Post Office, is .7 miles.

**Concern:** Customers expressed concern about the "Emergency Suspension" being implemented "due to no candidates being willing to assume operation of the office on its regular schedule".

**Response:** A qualified candidate could not be found to temporarily assume the position due to the limited number of hours that the office would be open. There were no local offices that could lose any clerks without having a negative impact on the service provided by the surrounding offices.

**Concern:** A customer raised the concern that the questionnaire for CPO service was used instead of the one for rural CBU delivery.

-4-

**Response:** Even though the wrong questionnaire was utilized, the Postal Service feels that sufficient communication and opportunity to comment on the alternative service was afforded to the customers.

The following thoroughly covered the proposed alternative service: the cover letter sent with the questionnaire, community meeting and the Proposed Noticed to Discontinue the Graves Mill Post Office that was posted at the Woltown and Madison Post Offices.

In addition to the questionnaires that were sent to each Graves Mill customer receiving delivery, additional surveys were available at the retail windows at the Woltown and Madison Post Offices.

**Some advantages to a CBU/Carrier Service proposal are:**

1. The carrier provides retail services, alleviating the need to go to the Post Office. *Stamps by Mail* order forms are provided for customer convenience.
2. Customers opting for carrier service will have 24-hour access to their mail.
3. Savings for the Postal Service contribute in the long run to stable postage rates and savings for customers.
4. Offers secure individually locked mail compartments. Parcel lockers provide convenient parcel delivery for customers.
5. Customers opting for carrier service will no longer have to pay Post Office box fees.
6. Saves time and energy for customers who drive to the Post Office to pick up mail.
7. Carrier delivery service is beneficial to some senior citizens, the handicapped, and working people since customers will no longer need to travel to the Post Office to pick up their mail.
8. Post Office Box Customers wishing a PO Box at the Woltown Post Office will pay the same fees.

**Some disadvantages to a CBU / Carrier Service proposal are:**

1. The loss of a retail outlet and a postmaster position in the community. Retail services are provided by the carrier.
2. Meeting the carrier at the CBU or rural box to transact business. However, it is not necessary to be present to conduct most postal transactions.
3. A change in mailing address. The community name will continue to be used in the new address; however, the new 911 address assigned by the county will need to be used and the ZIP Code changed to 22727.
4. Customers who want a Post Office box at the Madison Post Office will experience a Post Office box rental increase. Free service is available through carrier delivery.

Taking all available information into consideration, the Postal Service concludes this proposal will provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services to the community.

**II. EFFECT ON COMMUNITY**

-5-

Graves Mill is an unincorporated rural community located in Madison County. The community is administered politically by the Madison County Board of Supervisors. Police protection is provided by Madison County Sheriffs Department, and fire protection is provided by the Madison Volunteer Fire Department. The community is comprised of farmers, self employed individuals and those who commute to work at nearby communities.

There is one religious institution in the community. Businesses include: Valley Software Service, Stewards of the Rapidan, Mill Valley, Inc, Lewis Surveying, Old Mill Bed and Breakfast, small in home businesses and several farms. Residents travel to nearby communities for other supplies and services.

Nonpostal services provided at the Graves Mill Post Office will be available at the Madison and Wolfstown Post Offices. Government forms normally provided by the post office will also be available at the Madison and Wolfstown Post Offices or by contacting the local government agency.

The following nonpostal concerns were expressed on the returned questionnaires, at the community meeting, on the petition and on the congressional inquiry:

**Concern:** Customers expressed concern for loss of community identity.

**Response:** A community's identity derives from the interest and vitality of its residents and their use of its name. The Postal Service is helping to preserve community identity by proposing to continue the use of the Graves Mill in addresses and in the National Five-Digit ZIP Code and Post Office Directory. Each resident will be required to use their new 911 addresses. However, to ensure effective and regular service, the ZIP Code will change to 22727.

**Concern:** Customers were concerned about the loss of a gathering place and an information center.

**Response:** The local church can provide a site for the community to gather, socialize, and share information. The Postal Service will leave the community bulletin board in the church if the community wishes to continue to use it.

**Concern:** Customers stated that the Post Office was a convenient location to pick up tax forms.

**Response:** Tax forms can be easily obtained by calling the toll free Internal Revenue Service line at 1-800 829-3676.

Based on information the Postal Service obtained, it was determined that there has been minimal growth in the area in recent years. Carrier service is expected to be able to handle any future growth in the community.

To help preserve community identity, the community's name will be retained in the mailing address. It will continue to be listed in the *National Five-Digit ZIP Code and Post Office Directory*. Each resident will be required to use their new 911 addresses and change the ZIP Code to 22727.

Based on the information obtained in the course of this discontinuance study, the Postal Service concludes this proposal will not adversely affect the community.

### III. EFFECT ON EMPLOYEES

The postmaster retired on June 1, 2001. The noncareer postmaster relief (PMR) was separated from the Postal Service. No other postal employee will be adversely affected.

### IV. ECONOMIC SAVINGS

The Postal Service estimates an annual savings of \$9,437.65 with a breakdown as follows:

Postmaster Salary (EAS-51, Minimum)	\$6,745.44
Fringe Benefits @33.5%	2,259.73
Rental Costs, Excluding Utilities	<u>+1200.00</u>
 Total Annual Costs	 \$10,205.17
Less Annual Cost of Replacement Service	<u>-767.52</u>
 Total Annual Savings	 \$9,437.65

A one time expense of \$962.00 was incurred for installation of a CBU.

**V. OTHER FACTORS**

The Postal Service has identified no other factors for consideration.

**VI. SUMMARY**

The Postal Service is proposing to close the Graves Mill, VA Post Office and provide delivery and retail services by a rural route administered by the Madison Post Office, located 13 miles away. Customers will have the option of service to cluster box units or roadside mailboxes installed by customers on the carrier's line of travel.

The postmaster retired on June 1, 2001. Operations were suspended on COB June 1, 2001 due to no currently qualified candidates who indicated a willingness to assume the operation of the office on its regular schedule. The noncareer PMR was separated from the Postal Service. No other employee was adversely affected.

The Graves Mill Post Office provided 24 hours of window service per week to seventeen customers. A survey of the daily delivered pieces of mail delivered was conducted. It showed that an average of 63 pieces of mail is delivered each day. There are no permit mailers or postage meter customers.

Post office workload has declined from an EAS-C to an EAS-A level office. This would reduce the hours of operation to twelve hours per week.

Carrier service will continue to provide effective and regular service to the community. There will no longer be a retail outlet in the community. However, delivery and retail services will be available from the carrier, alleviating the need to travel to a Post Office for service. Customers opting for carrier delivery will have 24-hour access to their mail. To help preserve community identity, the community name will be retained in the mailing address. Customers will be required to use the new 911 addresses assigned by Madison County and change the ZIP Code to 22727. The Postal Service will save an estimated \$9,437.65 annually. A disadvantage to some may be in meeting the carrier to transact business. However, it is not necessary to be present to conduct most postal transactions.

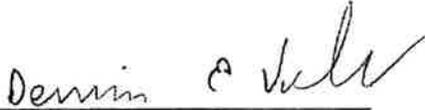
Taking all available information into consideration, the Postal Service has determined that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages and this proposal is warranted.

**VII. NOTICES**

- A. **Support Materials.** Copies of all materials upon which this proposal is based are available for public inspection at the Madison and Wolfstown Post Offices during normal office hours.
- B. This is a proposal. It is not a final determination to close this Post Office. If a final determination is made to close this Post Office, after public comments on this proposal are received and taken into account, a notice of that final determination will be posted in this office.

-7-

The final determination will contain instructions on how affected customers may appeal that decision to the Postal Rate Commission. Any such appeal must be received by the Commission within 30 days of the posting of the final determination.



Dennis E. Voorhees  
Dennis E. Voorhees  
Manager, Post Office Operations

9-4-07

Date

-2-

1. **Concern:** Customers were concerned about obtaining accountable mail and large parcels.

**Response:** If the customer lives less than one-half mile from the line of travel, the carrier will attempt delivery of accountable items and large parcels to the customer's residence. If the customer lives over one-half mile away or is not home when delivery is attempted, a notice will be left in the mailbox. Large parcels will be left outside the mailbox, in the parcel lockers or at a location designated by the customer (if authorized by the customer), or a notice will be left in the mailbox. Attempted delivery items will be taken back to the Madison Post Office. Customers may pick up the item at the post office, request redelivery on another day or authorize delivery to another party.

2. **Concern:** Customers expressed concern about collection of outgoing mail.

**Response:** Collection of mail will be made by the carrier when serving the route. The customer should raise the flag on the mailbox to alert the carrier that outgoing mail is to be collected from the mailbox.

3. **Concern:** Customers were concerned about senior citizens.

**Response:** Carrier service is beneficial to many senior citizens and those who face special challenges because the carrier can provide delivery and retail services to roadside mailboxes. Customers do not have to make a special trip to the post office for service. Special provisions are made for hardship cases or special customer needs. To request an exception for hardship delivery, customers may contact the Madison Postmaster for more information.

4. **Concern:** Customers said they would miss the special attention and assistance provided by the personnel at the Graves Mill Post Office.

**Response:** Courteous and helpful service will be provided by personnel at the Madison and Wolfstown Post Offices and from the carrier. Special assistance will be provided as needed.

5. **Concern:** Customers were concerned about having to travel to another post office for service.

**Response:** Services provided at the post office will be available from the carrier, and customers will not have to travel to another post office for service. Most transactions do not require meeting the carrier at the mailbox. Stamps by Mail and Money Order Application forms are available for customer convenience.

6. **Concern:** Customers were concerned that there was no qualified employee to staff the office.

**Response:** The Postal Service canvassed the immediate area, but unfortunately found no qualified employee available and willing to staff the office.

7. **Concern:** Customers were concerned about a change of address.

**Response:** Customers will be assigned a carrier route address. The new address will continue to use the community name. However, the ZIP Code will change to 22727. Mail will be forwarded in accordance with postal regulations, and change of address forms are available from the Postal Service to assist customers in notifying correspondents of the change.