

BEFORE THE
POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20268-0001

In the Matter of:

Wesleyville Branch
Erie, PA 16510
(William A. Wittenberg,
Petitioner)

Docket No. A2011-12

NOTICE OF UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

(April 12, 2011)

By means of Order No. 707 (March 31, 2011), the Postal Regulatory Commission docketed correspondence from a customer of the Wesleyville Branch in Erie, Pennsylvania, assigning PRC Docket No. A2011-12 as an appeal pursuant to 39 U.S.C. § 404(d).¹ That Order, at page 3, set April 12, 2011 as the date by which “[t]he Postal Service shall file the administrative record regarding this appeal” or “any responsive pleading to this Notice.” This pleading responds to that directive.

As an initial matter, this appeal concerns the discontinuance of a branch unit, which is a retail unit subordinate to a Post Office. See Publication 32, Glossary of Postal Terms (updated through July 5, 2007) at 91 (defining postal branch); *Wilson v. United States Postal Service*, 441 F. Supp. 803, 806-807 (C.D. Cal. 1977) (recognizing the situation where a “station or branch is ... subordinate to another Post Office”). In the Postal Service’s view, the discontinuance of the Wesleyville Branch does not require an official administrative record conforming to Post Office discontinuance regulations in 39

¹ The Wesleyville Branch appears on the list of stations and branches identified for possible discontinuance in PRC Docket No. N2009-1. See [USPS-N2009-1-4 - Current List of Stations/Branches Identified As Candidates for Discontinuance Study Under Station/Branch Optimization/Consolidation Initiative \(Public Version\)](#) (January 29, 2010).

CFR Part 241.3 and Handbook PO-101 because the Wesleyville Branch is not a Post Office.² Nonetheless, the Postal Service submits as Exhibit 1 the attached Final Determination to Close the Wesleyville Finance, PA Classified Branch and Continue to Provide Retail and Post Office Box Service through the Erie GMF, PA Post Office, which documents how Postal Service management considered the various effects of the instant discontinuance action on customers, employees, and the community.

The Postal Service also notes that the procedural requirements of 39 U.S.C. § 404(d) do not apply because the discontinuance of the Wesleyville Branch does not qualify as a closure envisioned by 39 U.S.C. § 404(d). As recognized in PRC Docket No. A2010-3, the section 404(d) procedural requirements apply only where postal customers lose access to postal services, and postal customers do not lose access to postal services where alternate retail facilities are located in “close proximity” to the discontinued station. See Order No. 477, PRC Docket No. A2010-3 (June 22, 2010) at 7-8. In this case, customers will continue to have access to the Erie Post Office located within 1.5 miles of the Wesleyville Branch. See Exhibit 2 (printout from “Locate a Post Office” on USPS.Com).³ Customers may obtain some postal services from

² The Postal Service understands that 39 U.S.C. § 404(d) does not extend to the review of Postal Service decisions regarding the discontinuance of stations and branches. See *generally* Reply Brief of the United States Postal Service (December 16, 2009), section III (pp. 6-12), PRC Docket No. N2009-1; Comments of United States Postal Service Regarding Jurisdiction Under (Current) Section 404(d), PRC Docket No. A2010-3 (April 19, 2010). In this matter, Petitioner does not allege facts that constitute a condition precedent to any jurisdiction of the Commission under section 404. 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)(5).

³ Exhibits 2 and 3 use the term “Post Office” for retail units staffed by postal employees, thus including stations, branches and Post Offices.

expanded access options, including the two stamp consignment sites located within 1.7 miles of the Wesleyville Branch – Giant Eagle and CVS – and Stamps By Mail®. See Exhibit 3 (printout from “Locate a Post Office” on USPS.Com). Accordingly, due to the close proximity of other postal facilities and the presence of expanded access options, the discontinuance of the Wesleyville Branch will not cause postal customers to lose access to postal services, and the section 404(d) procedures do not apply.

Even assuming the section 404(d) requirements were applied to the discontinuance of the Wesleyville Branch, the Postal Service satisfied the salient provisions of section 404(d). On August 18, 2009, the Postal Service distributed questionnaires to customers notifying them of the possible discontinuance of the Wesleyville Branch, and inviting comments on the potential change to the postal retail network. Exhibit 1 (Final Determination) at 1. The Postal Service made these questionnaires available over the counter for retail customers who did not receive mail delivery through the Wesleyville Branch. *Id.* Through this notification, the Postal Service furnished customers well over 60 days’ notice of the Postal Service’s intention to consider discontinuance of the facility. The Postal Service received seventy-nine customer responses to the questionnaires. *Id.* Upon making the final decision to discontinue the Wesleyville Branch, the Postal Service announced its decision publicly through a letter to community leaders dated March 18, 2011. See Appeal to USPRC to Prevent Closing of Wesleyville Post Office (Wesleyville, PA 16510-1700) (March 28, 2011).

The Postal Service further considered all of the pertinent criteria of section 404(d), including the effect on postal services, the community, and employees, and the economic savings arising from the discontinuance. Exhibit 1 at 1-4. Customers notified the Postal Service of their concerns related to postal services, including the conditions of other nearby postal facilities; the community, including concerns about the needs of disabled customers and senior citizens; and employees. *Id.* As reflected in the final determination, the Postal Service considered these concerns during the decision-making process. *See id.* With respect to economic savings, the Postal Service provided a breakdown of the costs that serve as a basis for its estimate of economic savings. *Id.* at 3-4.

In its responses to customer questionnaires, the Postal Service addressed customer concerns about obtaining services from a different postal retail location. Specifically, the Postal Service informed customers that after the discontinuance of the Wesleyville Branch, they would have a choice of carrier delivery or Post Office Box service. *Id.* at 1-2. It also explained that a change of address is necessary only for those customers choosing carrier delivery service, and that customers choosing Post Office Box service could retain their existing addresses. *Id.* In addition, the Postal Service identified the numerous retail service options available to customers, including the four alternate retail locations located within four miles of the Wesleyville Branch, and the ability to purchase stamps by telephone, through the internet, or at stamp consignment locations listed at www.usps.com. *Id.*

In summary, the Postal Service submits the attached documentation in support of the foregoing discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
By its attorneys:

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April 12, 2011

EXHIBIT 1

FINAL DETERMINATION TO CLOSE
THE WESLEYVILLE FINANCE, PA CLASSIFIED BRANCH
AND CONTINUE TO PROVIDED RETAIL AND POST OFFICE BOX
SERVICE THROUGH THE ERIE GMF, PA POST OFFICE

DOCKET NUMBER 16515

I. RESPONSIVENESS TO COMMUNITY POSTAL NEEDS

The Postal Service has determined to close the Wesleyville Classified Branch and provide post office box delivery service at the Erie GMF, PA Post Office located 1.9 miles away. The post office box customers will be able to retain their address if they move to the Erie GMF Post Office. If they choose to rent a post office box at another location or receive carrier delivery, they will have to change their address. Customers that receive carrier delivery out of the Erie GMF will retain the same delivery, the only change will be that they will have to go to the Erie GMF for packages and accountable items that the carrier was unable to deliver.

The Wesleyville Branch offers post office box delivery and retail services to 183 post office box customers. The revenue has continued to decline and with the moderate number of retail transactions provided, the Postal Service feels that effective and regular service will continue to be provided through city delivery service and retail service provided by the Erie GMF. Additionally, there are five contract postal units, post offices, stations, and branches located within a 6 mile radius. Additionally there are two alternate stamp locations within 0.93 miles from the Wesleyville Finance Station.

The Wesleyville Classified Branch provides service 33 hours a week from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Saturday to 183 post office boxes. Retail services include 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. Daily retail window transactions average 271. Office receipts for the last three years were: \$568,190 in FY-2007; \$587,490 in FY-2008 and \$448,530 in FY-2009. There are no permit mail customers.

When this final determination is implemented, delivery and retail services will be provided by the Erie GMF Station. All operations will be moved to this location. Window service hours at Erie GMF Station are from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Saturday. There are 270 Post Office boxes available. The Erie GMF provides 24 hour lobby access.

Retail Services are also available at the Kraus Department Store Contract Postal unit, located 3.1 miles away, Perry Square Station located 3.6 miles away, Downtown Station located 3.7 miles away. Alternate stamp locations include the Giant Eagle and Walgreens located 0.93 miles away.

On September 2, 2009 the Western Pennsylvania District conducted a Congressional Briefing. Representatives from the Postal Service provided information on Station/Branch Optimization and were available to answer questions.

On August 18, 2009 questionnaires were distributed to the post office box customers at Wesleyville Branch. Questionnaires were also available over the counter for retail customers at Wesleyville. Seventy-nine questionnaires were returned. Eighteen were favorable, 22 were unfavorable, and 39 expressed no opinion regarding the proposed alternate service.

The following postal concerns were expressed on the returned questionnaires and at the congressional briefing.

1. **Concern:** Customers expressed concern that the Erie GMF Station was not convenient for the customers living in the Wesleyville community.

Response: The Postal Service is proposing to move the post office box section to the Erie GMF Station, since it has room to accommodate more boxes. We understand that the distance may cause an inconvenience for some customers. Thus customers also have the option of renting a post office box at the Perry Square Station, located approximately 3 miles away, and retail service is available at that location. Customers also have the option of city delivery service to their residence.

2. **Concern:** Customers expressed concern over the long lines at the Erie GMF office.

Response: The Postal Service has a goal to keep customers wait time in line at 5 minutes or under. The Postal Service will continue to monitor window operations to try to alleviate any excessive wait in line to obtain services. Customers can also help the situation by trying to visit offices during non peak times, which are generally, when the window opens in the morning, during lunch and closing time. The Postal Service is certainly aware that customers live busy lives and we have taken steps to make obtaining services and products easier. Stamps by Mail envelopes are available at you local office. Customers can also purchase stamps by phone at (800) 782-6724 or through the internet at www.usps.com.

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

Response: Some customers will have to travel farther to obtain services. Since there are four alternate retail locations located within 4 miles of the Wesleyville Station, the Postal Service feels that customers can combine trips for service with other errands that are completed during the day. Customers also have the option of carrier delivery which would eliminate trips to the post office to obtain their mail. Customers can also purchase stamps by phone at (800) 782-6724 or through the internet at www.usps.com.

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

Response: Customers moving to Erie GMF office will not experience a change of address.

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. Stamps by Mail order forms are provided for customer convenience for those customers receiving city delivery service.
3. Customers opting for carrier service will have 24-hour access to their mail.
4. Customers who rent post office boxes at Erie GMF Station will have 24 hour access to their mail.
5. A savings for the Postal Service, which contributes in the long run to stable postage rates and savings for customers.
6. Customers opting for carrier service will no longer have to pay post office box fees.
7. City delivery services 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.
2. Customers needing services from a post office will have to travel to another location for those services. The Erie Station is located 1.9 miles away.

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

Wesleyville Branch is located in the borough of Wesleyville in Erie County, PA. Police protection is provided by the borough of Wesleyville. The community is comprised of retired people and those who commute to work at nearby communities, and those who work in local businesses.

There are four religious institutions and 66 businesses located in area. Residents travel to nearby communities for supplies and services.

The following nonpostal concerns were expressed on the returned questionnaires.

1. **Concern:** Customers expressed concern for those customers with disabilities who are not able to go to Erie GMF Station 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 curbside 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 Erie postmaster.

2. **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 Erie postmaster for more information.

Based on information the Postal Service obtained, it was determined that there has been minimal growth in the area in recent years. However, service through the Erie GMF Post Office, and the other contract postal units, stations, and branches within the area is expected to be able to handle any future growth in the community.

To help preserve community identity, the community's name and address will be retained in the mailing address. No change of address will be required for customers choosing post office box service at the Erie GMF.

Based on 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 clerk will be will become an unassigned regular until vacancies are posted for bidding. The custodian's hours will be absorbed into the existing custodian operation at the Erie GMF with out adding complement.

IV. ECONOMIC SAVINGS

The Postal Service estimates annual savings of \$101,992.13 with a breakdown as follows:

Clerk Salary (PS-7/PS-4 Minimum)	\$59,274.50
Fringe Benefits @33.5%	\$19,856.96
Inter-Station Transportation	\$1,360.32
Rental Costs, Plus Utilities	<u>\$27,600.00</u>

-4-

Total Annual Costs	\$108,091.78
Less Cost of Replacement Service	- 6,099.65
Total Annual Savings	\$101,992.13

The lease does not expire until November 30, 2012 and there is no termination clause. The Postal Service will be required to absorb the lease obligation resulting in \$70,000 in additional rental costs.

V. OTHER FACTORS

The Postal Service has identified no other factors for consideration.

VI. SUMMARY

The Postal Service has determined to close the Wesleyville Branch and provide retail and delivery services through Erie GMF Post Office located approximately 1.9 miles away. Post office box customers will have the option of retaining their post office box and number at the Erie GMF Office or closing the box and receiving carrier delivery service. Present carrier delivery customers will receive the same service with the exception of traveling to pick up accountable mail and parcels that the carrier was unable to deliver.

The Wesleyville Finance Branch provides 33 hours of window service per week. Daily retail window transactions average 271. There are no permit mailers.

Carrier service will continue to provide effective and regular service to the community. There will be a loss of a retail outlet in the area. However, delivery and retail services will be available at the Erie GMF Post Office. To help preserve identity, the name and ZIP Code will be retained in the mailing address. The Postal Service will save an estimated \$101,992.13 annually. A disadvantage to some may be in the extra travel to obtain services.

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

Notify customers of the permanent discontinuance of the Wesleyville Branch and advise them of the hours of operation and services available at the Erie GMF Post Office. Explain specific information on address changes and why the change is necessary.



Dean J. Granholm
Vice President

Delivery and Post Office Operations

02/24/11
Date

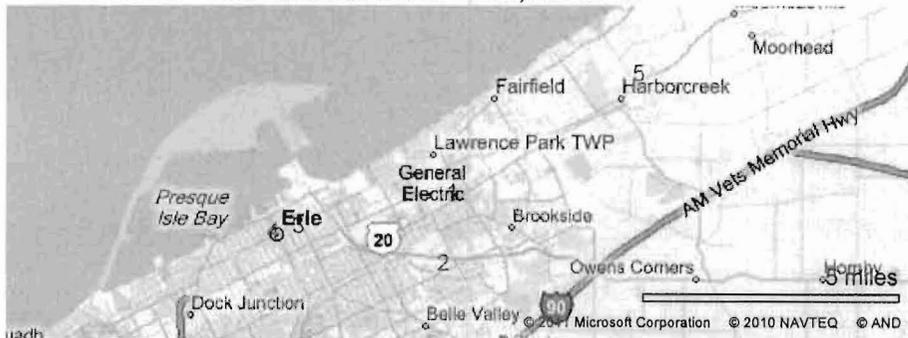
EXHIBIT 2



Post Office™ Locations

[PRINT](#) | [BACK](#)

Post Office™ Locations in the ERIE, PA area



- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>1 Post Office™
Location - WESLEYVILLE
3112 BUFFALO RD
ERIE, PA 16510-1700
(800) ASK-USPS
(800) 275-8777
(814) 898-7354</p> <p style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">0.0 mi</p> | <p>Business Hours
Mon-Thu
9:00am-12:30pm
1:30pm-4:30pm
Fri
9:00am-12:00pm
Sat-Sun
closed</p> | <p>Services
PO Boxes Online</p> <p>Service hours may vary. Please check link for business hours.</p> |
| <p>2 Post Office™
Location - ERIE
2108 E 38TH ST
ERIE, PA 16515-9998
(800) ASK-USPS
(800) 275-8777
(814) 898-7300</p> <p style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">1.4 mi</p> | <p>Business Hours
Mon-Fri
8:00am-6:00pm
Sat
8:00am-1:00pm
Sun
closed</p> | <p>Services
PO Boxes Online
Automated Postal Centers®</p> <p>Service hours may vary. Please check link for business hours.</p> |
| <p>3 Post Office™
Location - CPU KRAUS DEPT STORE
810 PARADE ST
ERIE, PA 16503-1116
(800) ASK-USPS
(800) 275-8777
(814) 453-4314</p> <p style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">3.1 mi</p> | <p>Business Hours
Mon-Fri
8:30am-5:30pm
Sat
9:00am-4:00pm
Sun
closed</p> | <p>Services
PO Boxes Online</p> <p>Service hours may vary. Please check link for business hours.</p> |
| <p>4 Post Office™
Location - PERRY SQUARE
629 STATE ST</p> | <p>Business Hours
Mon-Fri
9:00am-1:00pm
2:30pm-4:00pm</p> | <p>Services
PO Boxes Online</p> <p>Service hours may vary. Please check link for business hours.</p> |

ERIE, PA 16501-1151 Sat-Sun
 (800) ASK-USPS closed [check link for business hours.](#)
 (800) 275-8777
 (814) 453-6433
3.6 mi

5 Post Office™
Location -
HARBORCREEK
 7175 BUFFALO RD
 HARBORCREEK, PA
 16421-9800
 (800) ASK-USPS
 (800) 275-8777
 (814) 899-8636
4.3 mi

Business Hours
 Mon-Fri
 9:00am-12:00pm
 12:30pm-5:00pm
 Sat
 9:00am-12:00pm
 Sun
 closed

Services
[PO Boxes Online](#)
 Service hours may vary. Please
[check link for business hours.](#)

Post Office™ Locations near ERIE, PA

By City

[HARBORCREEK](#) [NORTH EAST](#) [MC KEAN](#) [WATERFORD](#) [WATTSBURG](#)

By ZIP Code

[16510](#) [16515](#) [16503](#) [16501](#) [16421](#) [16508](#) [16505](#) [16509](#) [16506](#) [16428](#)
[16426](#) [16441](#) [16442](#) [16415](#) [14736](#) [14775](#) [16417](#) [16427](#) [16438](#) [16412](#)

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EXHIBIT 3



Alternate Locations to Buy Stamps

Alternate Locations to Buy Stamps in the ERIE, PA area



- | | | | |
|---|---|--------|--|
| 1 | GIANT EAGLE
4500 BUFFALO RD
ERIE, PA 16510-2295 | 1.0 mi | Directions
More info
Nearby Businesses |
| 2 | CVS
1407 BUFFALO RD
ERIE, PA 16503-2417 | 1.7 mi | Directions
More info
Nearby Businesses |
| 3 | TOPS MARKET
1702 E 38TH ST
ERIE, PA 16510-3466 | 1.8 mi | Directions
More info
Nearby Businesses |
| 4 | VALU KING MARKET
1338 E GRANDVIEW BLVD
ERIE, PA 16504-2736 | 2.4 mi | Directions
More info
Nearby Businesses |
| 5 | CVS
3800 PINE AVE
ERIE, PA 16504-2328 | 2.8 mi | Directions
More info
Nearby Businesses |

Post Office™ Locations near ERIE, PA

By City

[HARBORCREEK](#) [NORTH EAST](#) [MC KEAN](#) [WATERFORD](#) [WATTSBURG](#)

By ZIP Code

[16510](#) [16515](#) [16503](#) [16501](#) [16421](#) [16508](#) [16505](#) [16509](#) [16506](#) [16428](#)
[16426](#) [16441](#) [16442](#) [16415](#) [14736](#) [14775](#) [16417](#) [16427](#) [16438](#) [16412](#)

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Business Search

Search for a business by name or category nationwide.

Reverse Phone Number

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