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POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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August 12, 2011

A2011-50

Postal Regulatory Commission
901 New York Ave. NW Suite 200
Washington DC 20268-0001

In RE: Appeal of The Postal Service Determination To Close The Prairie Hill Texas Post Office.
Docket 1378322-76678 Posted July 13, 2011.

This is To appeal the subject determination which is arbitrary and capricious and not in compliance with The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 which stipulates that The Postal Service shall provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services To rural areas, communities and small towns where post offices are NOT self-sustaing.

The Postal Service has ignored the expressed concerns from postal customers of the Prairie Hill Post office about the adverse effects of closing this facility including the inadequacies of the proposed alternate service through rural route service, cluster box units (CBUs) and retail services at the Coolidge, Texas located 11 miles away.

The Postal Service failed to fully consider the effect of the closing on the the well being of the community as a whole. The Prairie Hill Post office is the focal point for the community and provides many elderly residents with non Postal services as well as needed assistance with postal matters. Contrary to the viewpoint of the Postal Service closing of the Prairie Hill Post office does destroy community identity. Prairie Hill has only one business and one church. The Postal Service Post office has been open in Prairie Hill, Texas for approximately 100 years.

Mail security is a major concern with rural carrier service which could resut in theft of personal information such as social security numbers, credit accounts, bank account information resutting in possible identity theft. Also many postal customers receive regular medications by mail which could be compromised by theft and/or exposure to adverse weather conditions. In addition, many customers receive checks for goods and services and other considerations which are not secure in roadside mailboxes even those with [redacted] locks.

[redacted]

Some previous rural route customers discontinued this service and rented Post office Boxes at the Prairie Hill Post office due to mail security issues.

Another concern that has not been adequately addressed is delivery and pickup of packages together with large volumes of mail which will not fit in roadside mail boxes. Delivery of such items to unsecured areas such as porches or carports as proposed by the Postal Service would not be a viable option as many customers work away from home. Given increased [redacted] criminal activity in the area mail security is essential. Prairie Hill Post Office customers should not be forced to travel to the Coolidge Post office to pick up large packages or to obtain retail services which are not available from the carrier. Another problem service issue is the delivery of [redacted] certified mail by rural carrier when customers are unable to meet the carrier at the mailbox which would apply to many. In addition, mailing of large packages would require travel to a Post Office which is not possible for many customers

The economic savings set forth in the final determination seem questionable particularly the annual cost for replacement service of only $3894 which was not detailed and appears to be understated.

There would appear to be better cost savings options and leave the Prairie Hill post office open:

- Continue to operate the office with the PMR/OIC arrangement which has been done since July 2007 by choice of the Postal Service
- Renegotiate lease of the building for a lower amount. It would appear the owner would be willing to substantially reduce the lease amount versus a vacant post office building with no income.
- Reduce hours of operation and eliminate Saturdays.

one other issue that has not been addressed is safety of postal customers and the rural carrier in placement of mail boxes by the roadside. The two main roads in the residential area of Prairie Hill are FM 73 and FM 339. Both roads are narrow with no shoulders and volume of high speed traffic particularly FM 73. For those customers having to cross the road to pickup mail would jeopardize their safety as well as the rural carrier when servicing the boxes.

The final determination posted July 13, 2011 states in the first paragraph that service <u>will be provided</u> to cluster box units. As of August 12, 2011 CBU's have been placed on hold by the Postal Service due to puported logistical issues. This exemplifies very inefficient service in view of the fact post office closing will occur August 13, 2011.

In summary, the Postal Service determination to close the Prairie Hill Post Office is not compliant with Section 101(b) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 which stipulates government policy is that the Postal Service [redacted] shall provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services to rural areas, communities and post offices are not self sustaining. The [redacted] alternative services proposed by the Postal Service do not meet the mandated standards. It is a recognized and accepted [redacted] fact that the US Government intends for the Postal Service to serve the public in rural areas as such post offices were set up to provide effective service and [redacted] not to be a money making service.

Closure of this Post Office would have a long term irrevocable adverse effect on the Postal Patrons and the community itself.

Please review the facts of this case and require the Postal Service to:

1) Reverse their determination to close the Prairie Hill, Texas office.

2) If a order to reverse is not within commission authority require further review and justification from the Postal Service.

We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely

Stell Waldrop, Jr.

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