

Participant Statement
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BEFORE THE
POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20268

2011 AUG 23 P 12: 13

In the Matter of:

Minneapolis, NC 28652
Post Office State ZIP Code

POSTAL REGULATORY
COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Docket No: A2011-31

Ryan Carter, Petitioner(s)

PARTICIPANT STATEMENT

1. Petitioner(s) are appealing the Postal Service's Final Determination concerning the Minneapolis post office. The Final Determination was posted 7/13/2011.
(date)

2. In accordance with applicable law, 39 U.S.C. § 404(b)(5), the Petitioner(s) request the Postal Regulatory Commission to review the Postal Service's determination on the basis of the record before the Postal Service in the making of the determination.

3. Petitioners: Please set out below the reasons why you believe the Postal Service's Final Determination should be reversed and returned to the Postal Service for further consideration. (See pages 1-2 of the Instructions for an outline of the kinds of reasons the law requires us to consider.) Please be as specific as possible. Please continue on additional paper if you need more space and attach the additional page(s) to this form.

see attached pages

I believe that the Final Determination set forth by the Postal Service to close the Minneapolis Post Office (28652) should be reversed. I have outlined the reasons for this conclusion below:

FACTORS IMPROPERLY DISMISSED BY POSTAL OFFICIALS WHEN REACHING THEIR DECISION:

1. *The only community-accessible bulletin board / site of information exchange in the town of Minneapolis is located at the Minneapolis Post Office.*

Minneapolis Post Office currently offers its patrons community event announcements, resident updates, and small business information. In response to citizen concerns that the closure of the Post Office would take away this source of community communication, the Postal Officials dismissed the concerns, recommending that perhaps a general store or church could fulfill this role. I believe that this dismissal shows a lack of understanding about the town and its citizens.

Minneapolis does not have a general store or any other store in the town. There is no business that the town members frequent that could serve as an information hub. The answer showed that postal officials relied on faulty information and a canned response when answering the residents' concerns.

Minneapolis has three churches right in town with others nearby. Which parishioners should have access to the information? What about those who attend services away from town? What about folks who are of different faiths or folks who claim no faith? What about commercial information? (Many places of worship would not be comfortable posting business information inside the church, I imagine). What about postings or information that the church deems inappropriate? Should a church have editorial control over the community information? It seems strange that a postal official would suggest that a religious organization could, should, or would serve the community in the same capacity of the currently open, available, secular Post Office.

2. *The town of Minneapolis has a unique geography that makes rural service inconvenient and impractical for many residents.*

- a. Many Minneapolis postal customers live on non-State-maintained roads or private drives and cannot get rural delivery to their houses or must be granted special permission to do so. It is disingenuous to make decisions based on the idea that current postal patrons will be able to just put up a mailbox near their front door and have the reliable carrier bring the mail to them. It will not work that way for

everyone. Instead, lines of mailboxes and tire-track pulloffs are likely to scar the once-clear main highway through town. Meanwhile, the convenience of home delivery will not be realized by many Minneapolis patrons. For these "private-drive" citizens, their mail will instead be located on a US highway -- sitting in an unlocked mailbox; out of sight; out of earshot.

- b. In response to the community concern of mailbox security, Postal Officials claim that "customers may place a note in their mailboxes instructing the carrier to sound their horn when they arrive, in order to transact financial business." However, many local postal customers cannot get such special services from the rural carrier if they need to speak with him or her. It is an unrealistic part of the decision document that a Minneapolis postal customer that desires special services from a rural carrier can leave a note in his or her mailbox and have the driver sound the horn. Poor insight into the area leads to this gross misunderstanding of how this would really work. As previously stated, many of the Minneapolis Post Office customers do not live on State-maintained roads. Many of us live up private drives that would place us out of sight (and earshot) of a route carrier's vehicle. Since customers must ask for exceptions to get rural delivery on non-State-maintained roads, the "honk-by" will have no practical application for some customers. In fact, this stop-and-honk solution (given as response to a couple of customer concerns in the original proposal, by the way) is simply not realistic for a number of patrons.

FACTORS GIVEN IN SUPPORT OF THE CLOSURE DECISION, BUT WHICH DO NOT ADD UP TO THE CONCLUSION DRAWN:

1. ***I believe that the economic savings stated in the Final Determination document will not be realized by closure of the Minneapolis Post Office.***

The decision document does not indicate that the annual savings figures are the most recent annual figures, but I am assuming that in order to use them to justify closing a post office that they would need to represent the actual cost numbers for 2010 and not some theoretical situation. The reason that this is a concern is that the expenses / cost savings given in the document are listed for a Postmaster. However, Minneapolis has not had a Postmaster for years. Instead, as the proposal itself states, an OIC has been installed to operate the office – not a Postmaster. Yet, the costs / savings in salary and benefits are given for a Postmaster. If these expense figures are indeed for a Postmaster and not an OIC, these numbers are being used to paint a picture of expenses / savings that just are

not there. The OIC has provided quality postal service at the Minneapolis Post Office for years now, and continues to do so.

FACTORS NOT PROPERLY CONSIDERED IN THE CLOSURE DECISION:

- 1. I believe that the Postal Service did not properly consider the effect that the closing of the Minneapolis Post Office will have on the community served by the Post Office.***

There will be a damaging loss of the community hub. The Post Office is currently the central point of our small community. It is the first place that you go when you dig out from a snowstorm. It is the place in which neighbors encounter one another and catch up. It is the landmark by which directions are given. While qualities such as these are somewhat intangible and do not show up on a revenue spreadsheet, they underscore why the loss of the Post Office very much feels like the stopping of the community's heartbeat.

The small, very-rural community of Minneapolis does not consider this closure decision to be in its best interest. Not one person surveyed thought that this proposal was a good idea (original proposal, page 1). In fact, it should speak volumes that the Minneapolis voting precinct has 299 registered voters (Avery County Board of Elections website, retrieved July 2011) and the petition that was submitted to keep the Minneapolis Post Office open had 272 signatures (final determination document, page 1).