

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

*In the Matter of:*  
Minneapolis Post Office  
Minneapolis, North Carolina

Docket No. A2011-31

**UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE NOTICE OF SUPPLEMENTAL FILING**  
(August 25, 2011)

The Postal Service provides notice that it is filing a date-stamped copy of the Final Determination to Close the Minneapolis, NC Post Office and Establish Service by Rural Route Service. This document was not included in the administrative record filed on August 10, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
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FINAL DETERMINATION TO CLOSE  
THE MINNEAPOLIS, NC POST OFFICE  
AND ESTABLISH  
SERVICE BY RURAL ROUTE SERVICE

DOCKET NUMBER 1373330 - 28652

## I. RESPONSIVENESS TO COMMUNITY POSTAL NEEDS

The Postal Service is issuing the final determination to close the Minneapolis, NC Post Office and provide delivery and retail services by rural route service under the administrative responsibility of the Newland Post Office, located five miles away.

The postmaster position became vacant when the postmaster was promoted on September 01, 2007. Since the postmaster vacancy an OIC has been installed to operate the office. Postmaster level and office service hours are determined by a workload analysis which includes the number of deliveries and revenue.

The office was studied for possible closing or consolidation due to the following reasons: This office is currently vacant and earns less than 2 hours per day. There is an opportunity to cut costs while still providing a maximum degree of effective and regular postal service to the community.

The Minneapolis Post Office, an EAS-11 level, provides service from 07:30 to 16:30 Monday - Friday, 08:00 to 12:00 on Saturday and lobby hours of 7:30am -4:30pm on Monday - Friday and 8:00am -12:00pm on Saturday to 115 post office box or general delivery customers and no delivery customers. Retail services included the sale of stamps, stamped paper, and money orders; special services such as Registered Mail, Certified Mail, Insured Mail, COD Mail, and Express Mail services; and the acceptance and dispatch of all classes of mail.

The retail window averaged 17 transaction(s) accounting for 19 minute(s) of retail workload daily. With minimal workload, the Postal Service feels that effective and regular service will be provided by rural route service. Office receipts for the last 3 years were: \$18,914 ( 49 revenue units) in FY 2008; \$20,802 ( 54 revenue units) in FY 2009; and \$21,243 ( 55 revenue units) in FY 2010. There were no permit mailer(s) or postage meter customer(s).

On February 18, 2011, representatives from the Postal Service were available at the Minneapolis Post Office to answer questions and provide information to customers. 79 customer(s) attended the meeting.

On February 11, 2011, 125 questionnaires were distributed to delivery customers of the Minneapolis Post Office. Questionnaires were also available over the counter for retail customers at the Minneapolis Post Office. 63 questionnaires were returned. Responses regarding the proposed alternate service were as follows: 0 favorable, 38 unfavorable, and 25 expressed no opinion.

One congressional inquiry was received on February 16, 2011.

A petition supporting the retention of the Minneapolis Post Office was received on May 16, 2011, with 272 signatures.

When this final determination is implemented, delivery and retail services will be provided by the Newland Post Office, an EAS-18 level office. Window service hours at the Newland Post Office are from 08:30 16:30, Monday through Friday, and 08:30 12:00 on Saturday. There are 359 post office boxes available.

The proposal to close the Minneapolis Post Office was posted with an invitation for comment at the Minneapolis Post Office and Newland Post Office from March 14, 2011 to May 15, 2011. The following additional concerns were received during the proposal posting period:

1. **Concern:** Customer expressed a concern about package delivery and pickup

**Response:** For carrier pick up of packages, you can contact the Newland Post Office, letting the carrier know that you have a package available for pick up. The carrier can deviate from the line of travel in order to receive packages. The rural carrier will accept letters, flats or packages for mailing. The carrier will estimate the cost and provide a receipt for any money received. On the following delivery day the carrier will provide change or a bill for the amount over the estimate.
2. **Concern:** Customer expressed concern about picking up mail at Newland Post Office.

**Response:** The PO Box lobby in Newland is open 24 hours a day for customer convenience.
3. **Concern:** Customers expressed a concern about leaving money in the mailbox

**Response:** A questionnaire was sent to the postal inspection service concerning mail theft and vandalism in the suspendoffice area. Their records indicate that there has not been any report of mail theft or vandalism in the area.
4. **Concern:** Customers expressed a concern about security of mail in the mailbox.

**Response:** A questionnaire was sent to the postal inspection service concerning mail theft and vandalism in the Minneapolis area. Their records indicate that there has not been any report of mail theft or vandalism in the area. However, customers may place a note in their mailboxes instructing the carrier to sound their horn when they arrive, in order to transact financial business.

5. **Concern:** Customers expressed concern over the dependability of rural route service
- Response:** Rural letter carriers perform a vital function in the United States Postal Service serving thousands of families and businesses in rural and suburban areas while traveling millions of miles daily. Rural letter carriers are highly respected by the American public. This respect has been earned by many years of dedication to the Postal Service and to postal customers. During national and local emergencies, including prolonged periods of extreme weather conditions, rural carriers have demonstrated great responsibility in providing mail service to postal customers. Rural carriers are required to serve the route expeditiously and arrive at boxes at about the same time each day.
6. **Concern:** Customers felt the loss of a post office would have a detrimental effect on the business community
- Response:** The customer expressed a concern about the detrimental effect the loss of the post office would have on the community. Businesses generally require regular and effective postal services, and these will always be provided to the suspended Post Office community. There is no indication that the business community will be adversely affected. Questionnaire responses revealed that customers will continue to use local businesses if the post office is discontinued.
7. **Concern:** Customers questioned the economic savings of the proposed discontinuance
- Response:** The customer questioned the economic savings of the proposed discontinuance. Carrier service is more cost-effective than maintaining a postal facility and postmaster position. The Postal Service estimates an positive annual savings.
8. **Concern:** Customers were concerned about a change of address
- Response:** Customers will be assigned a carrier route address or can continue to use their PO Box number and ZIP Code at the Newland office. For customers choosing to have home delivery, 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. Items such as driver's license and personal checks can be changed upon renewal/replenishment.
9. **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 Newland Post Office. Customers may pick up the item at the post office, request redelivery on another day or authorize delivery to another party.
10. **Concern:** Customers were concerned about senior citizens
- Response:** The customer expressed a concern about senior citizens. 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.
11. **Concern:** Customers were concerned about vandalism of their mail box.
- Response:** A survey was sent to Postal Inspectors and no cases of mailbox vandalism were reported in your area.
12. **Concern:** You 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.

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

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

**Response:** The customer expressed a concern about the loss of the Communities' identity. 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 suspended Post Office name and ZIP Code in addresses and in the National Five-Digit ZIP Code and Post Office Directory.
2. **Concern:** Customers expressed concern for those customers with disabilities who are not able to go to adminoffice Post Office to pick up their mail

**Response:** The customer expressed a concern about those customers with disabilities who are not able to go to the post office to pick up their mail. 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.
3. **Concern:** Customers felt inclement weather and poor road conditions might impede delivery

**Response:** The customer expressed a concern about inclement weather and poor road conditions, that this might impede delivery. Both inclement weather and heavy mail volume can cause deviations from the normal delivery schedule. However, the carrier is required to provide a vehicle of adequate size, equipped with necessary equipment (chains or snow tires, warning lights or signs, etc.) to serve the route safely and efficiently and in accordance with federal, state, and local motor vehicle laws and regulations.
4. **Concern:** Customers were concerned about mail security

**Response:** The customer expressed a concern about the security of mail. 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.
5. **Concern:** Customer expressed a concern about irregular hours that the rural route serves the community

**Response:** The customer expressed a concern about irregular hours that the rural route serves the community. Our carriers strive to provide service at approximately the same time on a daily basis, however mail volumes and weather conditions often effect delivery times. If you desire special services from the rural carrier you may leave a note in your mailbox instructing the carrier to sound his horn, and then meet the carrier to receive services. Retail services may also be obtained at the Newland Post Office.
6. **Concern:** Customer expressed a concern about leaving money in the mailbox

**Response:** The customer also expressed a concern about leaving money in the mailbox. A questionnaire was sent to the postal inspection service concerning mail theft and vandalism in the suspended Post Office area. Their records indicate that there has not been any report of mail theft or vandalism in the area. However, customers may place a note in their mailboxes instructing the carrier to sound their horn when they arrive, in order to transact financial business.
7. **Concern:** Customers felt the post office should remain open since they paid taxes

**Response:**

The customer expressed a concern that since the people of your community paid taxes the post office should remain open. The Postal Service is not supported by tax dollars and must meet expenses by revenue it generates. Operational savings for the Postal Service contributes in the long run to stable postage rates and savings for customers.

8. **Concern:**

Customers were concerned about obtaining services from the carrier

**Response:**

The customer were concerned about obtaining services from the carrier, 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.

**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 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 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 of the proposal are:**

1. The rural and contract carriers may provide 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. CBU's can offer the security of individually locked mail compartments. Parcel lockers provide convenient parcel delivery for customers.
5. Customers opting for carrier service will not 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 of the proposal are:**

1. The loss of a retail outlet and a postmaster position in the community. Retail services may be provided by the rural or contract delivery carrier.
2. Meeting the rural or contract delivery carrier at the box to transact business. However, it is not necessary to be present to conduct most Postal Service transactions.
3. A change in the mailing address. The community name will continue to be used in the new address. A carrier route address will be assigned.

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

Minneapolis is an unincorporated community located in Avery County. The community is administered politically by Avery County. Police protection is provided by the Avery County Sheriff. Fire protection is provided by the Frank Volunteer Fire Dept. The community is comprised of commuters, law enforcement, accommodation and food services, health care, retirees and those who commute to work at nearby communities and may work in local businesses.

Businesses and organizations include: Michael's Wholesale Florist Appalachian House . Residents may travel to nearby communities for other supplies and services.

Nonpostal services provided at the Minneapolis Post Office will be available at the Newland Post Office. Government forms normally provided by the Post Office will also be available at the Newland Post Office or by contacting your local government agency.

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

1. **Concern:** Customer expressed a concern about the loss of the community bulletin board at the Post Office.

**Response:** Perhaps a church or general store can provide a community information meeting place.
2. **Concern:** Customer expressed a concern about the loss of the community bulletin board at the Post Office.

**Response:** Perhaps another business, such as a church or general store, can provide a community information meeting place.
3. **Concern:** Customer expressed a concern about the loss of the community bulletin board at the PostOffice.

**Response:** Perhaps another business, such as a church or general store, can provide the community with an informational meeting place.
4. **Concern:** Customer expressed a concern about the loss of the community bulletin board at the PostOffice.

**Response:** Perhaps another business, such as a church or general store, could provide an informational meeting location.
5. **Concern:** Customer expressed a concern about the loss of the community bulletin board at the PostOffice.

**Response:** Perhaps another business, such as a church or general store, could provide the community with an informational meeting place.
6. **Concern:** Customers expressed concern for loss of community identity and communication.

**Response:** Perhaps another business, such as a church or general store, could provide an informational meeting place.
7. **Concern:** Customers felt the loss of a post office would have a detrimental effect on the business community

**Response:** The customer expressed a concern about the detrimental effect the loss of the post office would have on the community. Businesses generally require regular and effective postal services, and these will always be provided to the suspended Post Office community. There is no indication that the business community will be adversely affected. Questionnaire responses revealed that customers will continue to use local businesses if the post office is discontinued.
8. **Concern:** Customers stated that the number of miles on the customer notification letter listed the distance from Minneapolis to Newland as 5 miles when it should have been 9-10 miles

**Response:**

Information was taken from an internet mapping site, listing the distance as 5 miles from Newland. This is incorrect; the record will be changed to reflect the correct distance as 9-10 miles.

9. **Concern:**

Customers expressed concern for loss of community identity

**Response:**

The customer expressed a concern about the loss of the Communities' identity. 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 suspended Post Office name and ZIP Code in addresses and in the National Five-Digit ZIP Code and Post Office Directory.

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

**III. EFFECT ON EMPLOYEES**

The postmaster position became vacant when the postmaster was promoted on September 01, 2007. The noncareer postmaster relief (PMR) may be separated from the Postal Service. No other Postal Service employee will be adversely affected. Since the postmaster vacancy an OIC has been installed to operate the office.

**IV. ECONOMIC SAVINGS**

The Postal Service estimates an annual savings of \$ 49,079 with a breakdown as follows:

Postmaster Salary (EAS-11, No COLA)	\$ 33,168
Fringe Benefits @ 33.5%	\$ 11,111
Annual Lease Costs	<u>+ \$ 4,800</u>
Total Annual Costs	\$ 49,079
Less Annual Cost of Replacement Service	<u>- \$ 0</u>
Total Annual Savings	<u>\$ 49,079</u>

**V. OTHER FACTORS**

The Postal Service has identified no other factors for consideration.

## VI. SUMMARY

This is the final determination to close the Minneapolis, NC Post Office and provide delivery and retail services by rural route service under the administrative responsibility of the Newland Post Office, located five miles away.

The postmaster was promoted on September 01, 2007. If the office has a noncareer PMR(s), they may be separated from the Postal Service; however, attempts will be made to reassign the employee(s) to a nearby facility. No other employee(s) will be adversely affected. The mail volume has declined. Effective and regular service will continue to be provided by rural route service.

The Minneapolis Post Office provided delivery and retail service to 115 PO Box or general delivery customers and no delivery route customers. The daily retail window transactions averaged 17. There are no permit mailers or postage meter customers.

There will no longer be a retail outlet in the community. However, delivery and retail services may be available from a rural or contract delivery carrier, which could alleviate the need to travel to a Post Office for service. The Postal Service will save an estimated \$49,079 annually. A disadvantage to some will be in meeting the rural or contract delivery carrier to transact business. However, it is not necessary to be present to conduct most Postal Service transactions with rural or contract delivery carrier.

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 Minneapolis Post Office and Newland Post Office during normal office hours.
- B. Appeal Rights. This final determination to close the Minneapolis Post Office may be appealed by any person served by that office to the Postal Regulatory Commission at 901 New York Ave 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 Minneapolis Post Office and Newland Post Office during normal office hours.



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Dean J Granholm  
Vice President of Delivery and Post Office Operations

07/15/2011

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Date