

**CITY OF ASHTON
2191 NETTLE AVENUE
ASHTON, IOWA 51232-7042**

Postal Regulatory Commission
Suite 200
901 New York Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20268.0001

Re: Ashton, IA 51232, Post Office Final Determination, Docket Number 1353512-51232

To whom it may concern:

The City of Ashton, Iowa is submitting our final appeal regarding the decision of the United States Postal Service to close the local office for the following reasons:

The City of Ashton feels the impact upon the provision of postal services will be less than what we currently have.

- Will another rural carrier be assigned to cover the extra work load of an additional 147 customers? If another carrier is not assigned, the mail may not be received in a timely manner.
- If a non-career employee would remain at the Ashton Post Office, their salary would be much less than a postmaster, so the estimated savings by the postal service would be greatly reduced.
- The Postal Service states that the patrons will still continue to be provided with regular and effective postal services, but if we do not have a drop box in Ashton and the mail has already been picked up by the rural carrier, the patron would have to drive to Sibley to get items mailed or to pick up packages if they were not able to be delivered.
- The Postal Service states that the customers can purchase stamps online through the Postal Service's website, however, many of our residents are elderly and do not have computer access or have never used a computer so they would not be able to order through the Postal Service's website. Many of our elderly residents do not drive out of town, so they would not be able to get their packages or supplies in a timely manner if the Post Office is closed. There are many residents on a fixed income who cannot afford the additional costs of having to travel to the Sibley Post Office. The financial burden should not be unfairly placed upon them.

The effect on the community would be largely felt by all residents.

- Currently, with the post office boxes and lobby, residents are able to pick up their mail, mail packages and purchase supplies in a climate controlled environment. If the post office is closed, those services would not be available at the same level that the residents are currently accustomed to and the boxes would be outside in the elements of the weather. So many of our residents are elderly, so it would be more difficult for them to get their mail if the boxes were outside. Who is going to clear the snow and ice from around the boxes if they are in the elements of the weather? It creates a dangerous situation for our elderly residents.
- The delivery of time sensitive materials would not be available. We have businesses that depend on the delivery of time sensitive materials as they have already stated.
- The City of Ashton depends on the Post Office to post their ordinances and notices as required by Iowa Code. We are to post them in three public places and the Post Office is one of those places where we have always posted our notices. The bulletin board is also used by many residents to post valuable information.

The Postal Service stated that there is no expected population, residential, commercial or business growth in the area. Within the last few years, we have added two new businesses; Ashton Laser Creation and Create-A-Concept. So the Postal Service is incorrect in their statement and they have no way of predicting whether we would have more new business growth. Furthermore, our proximity adjacent to the recently expanded Highway 60 corridor enhances our chance of attracting new businesses as transportation issues are minimized.

Ashton, IA was placed upon the list for closure due to past events, not based upon current status of the local post office. We have become accustomed to the reduced hours of the Post Office being open and we do not have a problem with having a non-career employee working there. The cost of savings do not reflect the correct status. The wages of the non-career employee should be used instead of the wages of a full time postmaster who also has benefits. If you would use the current wages paid with no benefits, you would see a substantial savings. These are the costs that should be used as they are what we have, rather than inflating the costs by using the wages of a full time postmaster with benefits, which we do not have.

The community size of Ashton merits continuance of the existing facility. Our population is ranked 8th on the population list and we should receive the same services that other communities our size and less are receiving. Our residents have just as much right as everyone else to be entitled to the same services. Our residents should not be targeted for closure of the Post Office due to the lack of the Postal Service's failure to maintain a profit or due to their lack of placing a Postmaster at our facility when they reassigned the one we had to another location.

We want to state again that the City of Ashton feels that continuance of a post office is merited. We feel that the Ashton Post Office was placed on the list for closure because of the "temporary status" placed upon the post office beginning in 2006 and the lack of a full-time Postmaster. We have shown that our population is similar to or larger than other nearby communities and definitely larger than the vast majority of the other post office locations being considered for

closure in Iowa. For this reason, we appeal the decision on the closing of the Ashton Post Office. We would like to consider other alternatives to save the Postal Service money, while still maintaining a post office in Ashton. The idea of sharing of a Postmaster with another nearby community was suggested. We have shown that Ashton can survive on a partial day window and would assume that a similar community could as well. This would save the postal service labor costs while still maintaining routine postal service in both communities. Please consider these suggestions so that we can have the service that our community deserves.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy A. Marnach". The signature is fluid and connects the letters together.

Nancy A. Marnach, City Clerk
City of Ashton