

Postal Service to eliminate Saturday mail delivery to street/rural addresses

Written by Wauneta Breeze
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By Sheri Hink-Wagner

The Wauneta Breeze

The United States Postal Service announced a change to its delivery schedule on Feb. 6 which will impact mail delivery on Saturdays.

The proposed change, which is slated to go into effect during the week of Aug. 5, 2013, will eliminate Saturday mail delivery to street addresses and rural routes. The delivery schedule to post office boxes is expected to remain the same under the new plan.

Patrick Donahoe, Postmaster General and CEO, in a statement, said, "Once implemented during August 2013, mail delivery to street addresses will occur Monday through Friday. Packages will continue to be delivered six days per week."

"Mail addressed to PO Boxes will continue to be delivered on Saturdays. Post Offices currently open on Saturdays will remain open on Saturdays," he continued.

The change to the delivery schedule is still a proposal at this time, coming from the Postmaster General and the USPS board of governors.

Wauneta's Postmaster Kathy Kerchal said the proposed new plan must get approval from the postal unions and Congress before it goes into effect in August.

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The plan cites a new five-day delivery schedule for street addresses and rural routes for mail items and a six-day (including Saturday) schedule for package delivery.

However, it is unclear from the release issued by the Postal Service earlier this month how packages to rural addresses will be handled.

“We don’t know the specifics of how Saturday rural parcel deliveries will be handled,” Kerchal said.

Despite uncertainty of Saturday package deliveries to rural and street addresses, Kerchal said Post Office hours of operation and mail delivery for Post Office box holders will remain unchanged.

Over the past several years the Postal Service has advocated a shift to a five-day delivery schedule for both mail and packages.

In its release earlier this month the Postal Service cited a recent strong growth in package delivery, 14 percent since 2010, and projections of even more increase to come as the rationale for maintaining parcel delivery on Saturdays.

The recent increase in package volume led the Postal Service to revise their long term plan.

Postal officials expect the proposed changes to save approximately \$2 billion annually when fully in place.

Since 2006, the Postal Service has reduced its annual cost base by approximately \$15 billion through a 28 percent reduction in labor force and consolidation of more than 200 mail processing locations.

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The USPS receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.