

Mail pick-up here could be moved up

By KEVIN BOTTRELL
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Proposal to move processing of outbound mail from Colby and Hays to Salina could move mail pickup time at the Oberlin Post Office up by more than two hours.

Rick Pivovar, Postal Service district manager for Nebraska and Kansas, said at a public meeting in Colby that the service is studying consolidating the mail processing centers in Colby and Hays into the one in Salina as part of a plan to combat crippling revenue losses over the past decade.

Pivovar said that mail going to be processed in Salina should actually have improved delivery to much of eastern Kansas — overnight instead of the current two-day service. However, outbound trucks will have to leave all northwest Kansas towns earlier. Mail not brought in before the deadline will go out the next day.

Mail has to be at the Oberlin post office by 5:05 p.m. today. Under the new plan, that would be moved up to 2:45 p.m., with the outbound truck leaving for Colby shortly after.

Even if a letter misses the truck, Pivovar pointed out, the mailer doesn't lose anything — if the mail is going out of the area. The service will be the same as if it had made the truck today — two-day delivery in much of the state.

- Some sample cutoff time:
- Norcat: now 2:55 p.m., change to 4:35 p.m.
 - Jennings: now 4:05 p.m., change to 2:25 p.m.
 - Norton, now 5:30 p.m., change to 3:30 p.m.
 - Colby: now 7 p.m., change to 4 p.m.
 - St. Francis: now 4:40 p.m., would change to 2:15 p.m.
 - Goodland: now 4:40 p.m. (Mountain Time), change to 1:45 p.m.
 - Hoxie: now 5:56 p.m., change to 3:21 p.m.

Pivovar said there would be no changes in delivery times, retail services, business mail acceptance or commercial rates. However, some carriers, especially those in rural areas, wouldn't be able to make it back to their post office in time to get outgoing mail onto trucks that night.

Pivovar said the consolidation will save about \$130,000 a year at the Colby and Hays post offices, mainly from reduced work hours.

The Postal Service is in what Pivovar called an "acute financial crisis." Electronic communication, the recession and changes in the makeup of the mail, have resulted in a 42 percent decline in first class mail since 2001. The service lost about \$8.5 million last year, and Pivovar estimated it would have to spend an extra \$500 million this year on motor fuel alone, as it has one of the largest transportation fleets in the country.

The demand and volume of mail has been reduced, he said, but the Postal Service still has the manpower and equipment to process the larger volume, and so it has to make reductions.

He said in addition to the Hays and Colby centers, consolidation proposals are in the works for the mail processing centers in Lincoln, Neb., Hutchinson and Independence.

"It's the same thing that's happening across the country," he said.

Pivovar said the Postal Service already consolidates Saturday mail sorting from smaller offices to larger ones in eastern Kansas, and has done so for some time.

"We're already doing a lot of that," he said. "It's making us more efficient."

He said he has also been reviewing post offices with nine carrier routes or less that have another office within 10 miles to see if the carrier routes can be combined. He said he just finished 23 public meetings in towns where the service plans to close offices that have had vacant postmaster positions.

"What I've been telling my employees is everything potentially is on the table for review," he said.

James Foster, rural development representative with the Kansas Department of Commerce, asked if the Salina processing facility will need to be upgraded to handle mail from Colby and Hays. Pivovar said part of the reason the service chose Salina is because it already has enough capacity. The service will have to have to add more man-hours in Salina to process the mail, however.

Steve Haynes, president of Nor' West Newspapers, owner of *The Oberlin Herald*, said the changed time will affect the printing and mailing schedules at small businesses, especially newspapers. He asked if the service had studied the economic impact of the plan, and Pivovar said it had not.

Pivovar, while defending the change, said he recognizes that for anyone whose service will be downgraded, the change will be important.

Colby City Councilman Dave Voss said the local impact of closing the Colby sorting facility on the town would be greater than its national impact, which would be a drop in the bucket compared to the service's financial problems. Employees here spend money in town and their families attend our schools, he said.

"I think that you guys should look for bigger fish to fry," Voss said.

"\$99,000 doesn't sound like much," Pivovar said, "but we're looking at a hundred of these AMP studies. Some are 500-person facilities."

Pivovar said his office has done its initial review of the proposal. The Office of the Inspector General has also done an audit, he said, and found the overall scheme to be financially sound. Notes from the community meetings, as well as any concerns or suggestions sent in by mail, would go into the official records submitted to the regional office in Denver and then to the national office, he said.

If the plan is approved, the public will be notified and the service then has 60 days to make the change.

Puttin' in cups



ON MAIN STREET on Saturday, Mary Ann Erickson helped put special small black plastic cups in the fence across the street from the Last Indian Raid Museum. The scene portrays a cowboy and cattle.

— Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

Council members approved

Mayor Bill Riedel appointed two new members to the Oberlin City Council on Thursday, filling vacancies left by the death of one member and his own election as mayor.

The council approved his appointment of Fonda Farr, an agent with Fredrickson Insurance, and Josh Williby, who teaches at the high school. The spots were left vacant by Mayor Riedel and the late Richard Kimble. Both terms run until spring 2013.

City Administrator Karen Larson said the Oberlin Lions Club wants to fix the fence around the city ball field. They are asking for \$250 each from the county and the city.

She said the city could probably find the \$250 somewhere.

The city does all the mowing at the ball park and replaces the lights for free, the administrator noted.

The council approved spending the \$250.

Mrs. Larson said they still need a council representative to the Sappa Park Committee. With no volunteers, Mayor Riedel suggested the council members think about it for a week or two and then he will see if anyone is interested.

He said there isn't a whole lot new to report on the airport. The federal money still isn't available, although construction is still planned to start on rebuilding the current runway this year.

In other business, the council:

- Heard that Jeremy Tally, the new cemetery sexton, did a wonderful job getting the sites ready for two trees to be planted at Centennial and City parks.

- Heard that Nex-Tech Communications is having a problem getting supplies, as they come from Japan, so the fiber-optic project here is being pushed back until December or the first part of January.

- Learned that the boiler at the city swimming pool is broken. Parts to fix it have been ordered.

- Heard that Mayor Riedel and Foreman Dan Castle went to the Kansas Municipal Energy Association and Kansas Municipal Utilities conference in Wichita. They heard that the federal Environmental Protection Agency is starting to crack down on coal-fired powered power plants. That agency, said Mr. Castle, never goes away but the state group is trying to slow them down a little to help small towns.

- Held a 15-minute closed session for attorney-client privilege, with the city attorney, mayor, council and administrator. There was no action taken.

Businesses to close for holiday

Most Oberlin businesses will be closed Monday for Memorial Day, including federal, state, county and city offices and all banks and financial institutions.

The Oberlin Herald will be closed. The paper will print a day later than usual next week, so copies may be picked up on Wednesday after-

noon, with mail delivery mostly on Thursday.

Deadline for the Country Advocate will be noon on Friday as usual. Deadline for news and advertising for the paper will be noon Tuesday, rather than Monday.

Raye's Grocery will be open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday

and Monday. Crossroads Express, Eagle Convenience, Pizza Hut and Frontier Restaurant will be open on Memorial Day. The LandMark Inn will have a breakfast buffet from 8 to 10:30 a.m. Monday. The senior meal site at the Golden Age Center will be closed.

Museum to have hospitality room

The Last Indian Raid Museum will have a hospitality room for the Decatur Community High School alumni weekend from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Coffee, tea, water and snacks will be available.

The Oberlin Business Alliance will have a burger-and-brat fry over the lunch hour at the museum on

Friday. Also, the American Legion Auxiliary will be selling poppies for Memorial Day.

The museum has the alumni directories on sale for \$10 at the counter or \$15 by mail.

Rawlins County Health Center

RAWLINS COUNTY HEALTH CENTER COMMUNITY CALENDAR

707 Grant
Atwood, KS 67730
(785) 626-3211

Bringing Specialized Healthcare To Your Community

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
			Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic	MRI'S	Nuclear Medicine Cardiac Rehab	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	Dr. Rubowitz Oncology		Dr. Frankum Surgery	Dr. Reeves Podiatry	Dr. Reeves Podiatry	
	Mammograms Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab		Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic	MRI's	Cardiac Rehab	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
			Dr. Curtis Cardiology	Dr. Saba Orthopedics		
	Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab		Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic	MRI's	Nuclear Medicine Cardiac Rehab	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
			Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic	MRI'S	Cardiac Rehab	
	Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab	DEXA Bone Density				
26	27	28	29	30		
	Dr. Rubowitz Oncology	Dr. Frederick C. Miller Cardiology				
	Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab		Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic	MRI'S		

TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT WITH A VISITING PHYSICIAN, PLEASE CALL (785) 626-3211 Cheryl Banister, RN Specialty Clinic Director

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY
SUNDAY JUNE 20

When we all give back, our communities move forward!

Hospital employees donated school supplies and cash to elementary schools in McCook, Indianola and Culbertson for students in need.

The annual diabetic health fair and health expo provide valuable health information at low or no cost.

Our employees are encouraged to volunteer in many ways such as delivering Meals on Wheels.

Giving back to the community is the neighborly thing to do! As your community hospital, we give back in ways that promote the better health of our residents.

Every year we help defray the cost of charity care and certain subsidized health services, and cover the unfunded expenses of services for patients with Medicare and Medicaid insurance.

Another way we give back is by providing no- or low-cost health services and educational opportunities to the public — such as health fairs, screenings for diabetes and other diseases, and offering classes to new mothers or exercise programs to those 55 plus.

As your community hospital — and the area's largest employer — we encourage our employees to also give back to their community however they can. *After all, when we all give back, our communities move forward!*

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