

SCA Newsletter March 2010

Patrons of the Beallsville Postal Service were notified recently that their office would be closed in August 2010. The notification letter then went out requested that each resident fill out a questionnaire about how the closing would impact them and their community. SCA has written three letters to regional Postal Service officials, but we do not have clear answer for the Beallsville residents.

There is no doubt that the U.S. Postal Service is in genuine financial straits. It is simply much easier to write a message and click "Send" then to arrange for the delivery of a letter. Still, there are many services that a post office can provide to a community. We still want to order things by mail, send our own packages and apply for passports.

One of the troubling aspects of eliminating the Beallsville service is that many rural residents rely on having their mail delivered to boxes or by rural mail carriers. While rural delivery will be supplied by other area post offices, it will require traveling longer distances for carriers and patrons. There appears to be an assumption that since there are not as many rural postal patrons, these offices can be closed first to save money. Just because fewer people live in rural locations should not make them the first targets of government belt tightening. Other criteria such as convenience of alternative service in urban areas or even higher fees for advertising materials should be considered before reducing mail for rural customers just because they live in more scattered locations.

The Beallsville community may be the first in our region to lose a post office. Further reductions have been suggested although we are reassured that no additional closings are planned for the moment. We suggest that the US postal service devise a set of criteria for closing that can be examined and challenged at public hearings. Rural people are mostly reasonable folks who will work hard to do what is right for our communities and citizens. We just want an open process and a healthy dialogue before action is taken.

We want to remind area residents that the Sugarloaf Citizens' Association Annual Meeting will be held at the Barn on Linden Farm at 20900 Martinsburg Rd, Dickerson, Maryland on April 17 beginning at 9:30. A full agenda will be presented in our next Newsletter.