Postal service plans to keep weekend package distribution

U.S. post offices, including the one in Gothenburg, plan to discontinue Saturday mail delivery starting the week of Aug. 5.

Local postmaster Kevin Allard emphasized that package delivery will continue on Saturdays.

“We don’t deliver a lot of mail on Saturdays but we do deliver a lot of packages and priority mail,” he said.

Allard said the volume of package delivery from the local post office has increased substantially over the past year as more people shop online.

Nationally, package delivery has spiked 14% since 2010, U.S. Postal Service officials said.

Under the plan, delivery of mail to street and rural addresses will continue Monday through Friday and mail addressed to post office boxes will continue on Saturdays.

The doors of post offices already open on Saturdays, like in Gothenburg, Farnam and Brady, will stay open but some hours were reduced.

Saturday hours at the post offices in Farnam and Brady were cut Jan. 28 to one hour on Saturday. Week day hours were reduced to four daily.

USPS officials said the $2 billion expected in savings from the elimination of Saturday mail delivery will also come from employee reassignment and attrition.

Since Jan. 28, Allard's administrative duties have increased.

Allard was named administrative post office manager for remotely managed post offices in Brady, Farnam and Maxwell in addition to his Gothenburg postmaster duties.

A post office relief representative is still available in those offices but Allard has taken over administrative duties.

"I gained a lot more customers," he said with a laugh. "but I just do it.

"We have great communities out there that are easy to manage."

Allard said he can't speculate whether or not personnel will be affected by the discontinuation of Saturday mail delivery.

Currently there are 14 full- and part-time employees at the Gothenburg post office, he said, and six city and rural routes.

USPS officials announced Feb. 6 that they planned to transition to the new delivery system.

Research conducted by the Postal Service and independent news organizations indicated that nearly seven out of 10 Americans, or 70%, supported the switch to five-day mail delivery to help reduce costs, officials said.

Postal service officials made the announcement of the mail delivery change more than six months in advance to give residential and business customers time to plan and adjust and will

publish specific guidance information later.

Officials said the postal service is implementing major restructuring throughout its retail, delivery and mail processing operations.

Since 2006, the postal service has reduced its annual cost base by approximately $15 billion, reduced the size of its career workforce by 193,000 (28%) and has consolidated more than 200 mail processing locations.

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