

# **PLEASE HELP SAVE THE PITKIN POST OFFICE!**

October 12, 2011, compiled by Suzy Metzler

**Please write letters** (you can send the same letter to all of them) to the people listed below as soon as possible so that they will see that there are many people who care about having the Pitkin Post Office kept open!

1. Some points to make in your letter are:

The Town of Pitkin has had a U.S. Post Office since 1879.

Pitkin has no stores open year-round, all are seasonal, so we are not a candidate for having a "Village Post Office" set up in one of our stores.

It is 30 miles each way to Gunnison, the nearest post office where we could buy stamps, pick up packages, receive send registered or certified mail , buy money orders, get supplies for priority mail mailings, and in some cases, pick up mailed medications. Most people who live here try to minimize the long trips to Gunnison and many try to go only once a week or once every two weeks.

The Pitkin area is a growing area. In the past 5 years, we have had an increase in services provided by the phone company and a cell phone company, in the way of DSL internet service and cell telephone service (December 2010).

Pitkin is the longest incorporated town on the Western Slope of Colorado and only one of five incorporated towns in Gunnison County.

Pitkin is still self-governed by a Mayor and Town Board with a Clerk/Treasurer who meet the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Pitkin Town Hall, built in 1900.

Pitkin's children are taken by school bus the 30 miles to Gunnison each school day.

The U.S. Forest Service has a Passport in Time program whereby volunteers work each summer just a few miles away to restore the historic Alpine Tunnel, which at one time was the highest tunnel in the world.

Some of Pitkin's school children are home-schooled, and there are also quite a few home-based businesses located in town, all of which are dependent on the U.S. Mail on a regular basis.

Both UPS and Federal Express come to Pitkin on a daily basis.

At an elevation of 9242 ft. above sea level, Pitkin can - and does - get snow any month of the year.

2. VERY IMPORTANT!!! At the root of this whole issue of closing rural Post Offices nationwide, and much of the reason that the U.S. Postal Service is in such dire straits financially - is that beginning 2006, the U.S. Congress began to require that the USPS prepay retirement benefits 75 years in advance! The USPS is paying for benefits for employees who have not even been BORN yet! No other similarly independent entity that is controlled by the U.S. Congress has this requirement! NONE!

Montana Senator Max Baucus has proposed a Bill which would help out tremendously. Here are details:

Senator Baucus' Bill does two things:

**1. Prevents the Postal Service from closing any Post Office where another office is not available within 10 miles**

*The Postal Service has claimed that nationwide 90 percent of the post offices they are studying for closure are within 10 miles of another post office. Baucus has pointed out that among the 85 rural Montana offices the Post Office is studying, approximately 90 percent are actually farther than 10 miles from another office. And in some cases the next nearest office is also being studied for closure.*

**2. Provide the Postal Service approximately \$7 billion in financial relief to avoid default this year**

*The Postal Service is currently required to pre-fund it's retiree health benefits. At the same time, it is estimated the Postal Service has overpaid into another retirement fund, the Federal Employee Retirement System, by approximately \$6.9 billion. Baucus' bill would require the Office of Personnel Management to calculate the exact overpayment the Postal Service has made and use that money to cover the Postal Service's current payment into the retiree health benefits fund and ease the burden of next year's payment. Baucus also supported a provision in the recently passed Continuing Resolution to delay the immediate health benefits payment while Congress works towards a longer-term solution.*

Also, more flexibility needs to be given to the US Postal Service so that they can make changes that will help them. Currently everything has to be decided by Congress and as we can all see, Congress is not very good at making decisions or taking action!

**Please** spend a few minutes in writing a letter to the following government officials.

Dean Granholm  
Vice President, Delivery & Post Office Operations  
2157 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Marcela Juarez Rivera  
District Discontinuance Coordinator  
Colorado/Wyoming PFC  
7500 E. 53rd Pl., RM 2214  
Denver, CO 80266-9631

Representative Darrell Issa  
Government Reform Committee Chair  
2347 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Thomas Carper  
United States Senate  
513 Hart Building  
Washington, DC 20510

In the letters to these two senators, this area's Representative, and to the Gunnison County Commissioners, please urge them to contact the people listed above to encourage them to make the decision to keep the Pitkin Post Office open.

\*ALSO, please see above #2, as the two Senators and Rep. Scott Tipton are members of Congress, and they could really help to implement these changes by supporting Senator Max Baucus' bill:

\*Senator Michael Bennet  
1200 S. College Ave., #211  
Fort Collins, CO 80524

\*Senator Mark Udall  
999 18th St. North Tower, Suite 1525  
Denver, CO 80202

\*Rep. Scott Tipton  
218 Cannon HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Gunnison County Commissioners  
200 E. Virginia, Ste. #104  
Gunnison, CO 81230

**PLEASE DO TAKE THE TIME! The time you spend now in writing a quick letter to the above named individuals may very well save you a lot of time later on!**

Also, please email comments to [prc-pagr@prc.gov](mailto:prc-pagr@prc.gov) by October 31, 2011.