

By Jan Rahn

Managing Editor

Post offices along the Highline, with the exception of Grant, are on a list of post offices being considered for a cut in operation hours under a new proposal from the U.S. Postal Service.

Venango, Madrid, Elsie and Wallace are listed as possibly being affected by the proposed hours of operation. Each of the postal services is being considered for only four hours of operation per day.

Congressman Adrian Smith urged residents of Nebraska's Third District to speak out on a Postal Regulatory Commission proposal to reduce costs by changing operating hours at more than 17,000 postal retail locations nationwide. Comments were being accepted through mid-June.

The postal service says the goal of the plan is not to save \$500 million but to improve efficiency and meet customer needs by matching retail hours and services to community postal needs and use patterns.

In May, it was announced that the financially struggling U.S. Postal Service would seek keeping thousands of rural post offices open with shorter hours rather than wide scale cuts. The entity said more than 13,000 rural mail facilities could see reduced operations of between two and six hours.

Previously, closures were threatened, Venango being among those on the proposed list.

The North Platte distribution center had also been threatened. Good news for area postal patrons was received in February when it was announced that North Platte's center would remain open. However, Grand Island, Norfolk and Alliance lost their centers.

Other in the area included in the current proposal of cutbacks include: Big Springs, Brule, Champion, Enders, Hayes Center, Paxton, Welfleet.