



A LARGE CROWD filled the McDonald Senior Center on Tuesday, Feb. 12, to hear what the future might be for the McDonald Post Office.

Times staff photos by Norma Martinez

Post office meeting draws big crowd

By Norma Martinez

bc.times@nwkans.com

McDonald residents showed they were interested in keeping the McDonald Post Office open with at least 100 residents attending the meeting at the Senior Citizens Center on Feb. 12.

Dan Wishall, the acting manager from Post Office Operations called the meeting to discuss the results of the surveys mailed out during January for making changes to the operation of the McDonald Post Office.

Out of the 167 surveys mailed out, 111 were returned. Of these 107 residents were in favor of a realignment of hours, three residents showed an interest in a delivery option, and one resident made no selection as to their preferences.

None of these residents were in

favor of the Village Post Office Option which would be to locate the post office in a location, such as a local business, library, town hall or government center, run by the proprietor or management. Neither was anyone in favor of the Nearby Post Office Option which would be to locate the post office in; Bird City which is 9.3 miles from McDonald, Atwood at 18.76 miles away, or St. Francis which is 23.9 miles away.

After reviewing these surveys and taking into account the overwhelming response to the postal service operational needs, it was determined the retail hours will likely be, Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. and Saturday from 8-9:30 a.m.

Total Saturday window service hours will not be reduced and access to delivery receptacles

will not change as a result of the Post Plan realignment of weekday window service hours. Access to the delivery receptacle will also remain the same as they currently are, as well as the mail dropped in the blue boxes

The information received during last week's meeting will be considered in determining the final hours of operation. These changes will not go into effect until 30 days after the posting date at the post office. As of Tuesday it has not yet been posted.

Once the changes have been made they will be reviewed annually. Based on the retail intake of the McDonald office, they will determine whether future changes will be made.

"I do not know when this review will take place," Mr. Wishall said. "What I do know, is that if you

do not use it enough to justify the post office remaining here, you will lose it.

"With this in mind, the revenue generated will be expected to continue at the same rate as it presently is, but within the course of 21.5 hours of operation. The more you use it, the more it will justify the post office being in McDonald."

The question was asked about mailing packages online in the afternoon, and his answer was,

"If you specify the post office zip code 67745, McDonald will get credit for it," Mr. Wishall said.

Most resident's concern was why these cuts in postal service centers are necessary?

It was due to a 27-percent drop in customer retail visits from 2005 to 2011, Mr. Wishall said. This

drop caused a shortfall of about \$5 million per year for the prepaid health care benefits required to be paid out for postal service retirees. These payments, he said, have not been made in the last two years.

The postal service is the only organization required by Legislation to pay these benefits, he said. The First Master General has requested Congress to look into this, and either ease up on the amount the post office has to pay, or restructure it in some way to make it possible for them to pay.

A study has shown the post office has overpaid, he said, however to date they have not determined whether they will give a refund, or what they are going to do about it. As of last year that was two-thirds of the losses. Until Congress enacts on that, he said, it is out of our hands.



DAN WISHALL, acting manager from post office operations, was the speaker.

Senator meets in Sainty

Kansas State Senator Ralph Ostmeyer, 40th District, with Kansas Representative Ward Cassidy, 120th District, will be visiting communities in Northwest Kansas on Saturday, Feb. 23, to seek patron's ideas on issues being addressed in the 2012 Kansas legislature.

Information will be presented from many of the issues being considered and discussion will be held on anticipated issues and their impact on all residents. Everyone is urged to attend.

From 8 to 9 a.m., they will be at Cuppa Joe Espresso, St. Francis Main Street; from 10 to 11 a.m., they will be at Williams Brothers Grocery, Atwood; and from noon to 1 p.m., they will be at the Decatur County Courthouse.

From 2 to 3 p.m., Mr. Ostmeyer and Rep. Couture-Lovelady will be at Town and Country Kitchen, Norton. From 4 to 5 p.m., Ostmeyer and Couture-Lovelady will be at Hanson Memorial Plaza, Logan.



NEW TELEVISION was installed at the Bird City Senior Center last week. Pictured are Brady Smith and Jordan Dunkers from Dunkers Radio and TV. Times photo by Norma Martinez

Sealed bids opened for digging

Six sealed bids were opened when the Cheyenne County Commissioners met on Friday. The bids were for digging the eighth cell at the landfill.

The commissioners accepted the low bid of \$89,252 from McCormicks Excavating, Stratton, Colo.

This will be the last cell that can be built on the land.

Bids ranged from \$3.22 per

cubic yard to \$1.22. Bids were: Salt and Light Contracting, \$3.22 per cubic yard, total, \$235,575; MJE, \$2.18 per cubic yard, total, \$159,488; McCormick Earth and Power Excavating, \$1.22 per cubic yard, total, \$89,252; Workman Terracing, \$1.96 per yard, total, \$149,393; Carpert Earth Moving, \$1.35 per yard, \$98,766; Cahoj Earth Moving, \$1.30, \$95,108.

Before accepting the bids,

Ernie Ketzner, commissioner, wanted to know if the bids were comparing apples to apples. They agreed that they bidding by the cubic yard and that Penco, the engineering company drawing up the specifications, had figured the yards.

Dave Flemming, public works supervisor, went over some of the specifications with Jim McCormick and the commissioners. The cell

Board talks about bills and balancing

The matter of bills not paid and the reasons were discussed when the Cheyenne County Commissioners met on Friday.

Dolores Jenik, treasurer, was present to talk to the commissioners about the discussion and questions brought up at the Jan. 31 meeting. Dale Patton, commissioner, was upset because the end of the year balance had not been made in a timely fashion. Because bills had not been paid by the clerk's department, there were late statements and the county's credit card had been denied. He said there were business people wondering why they had not been paid.

A heated discussion followed between Mrs. Jenik, Deb Lindsten, deputy clerk, and Mr. Patton.

Mrs. Jenik admitted she had trouble getting the end of year balanced but she also pointed out that in a conference call, she had been told twice, that the clerk could pay the bills. Ms. Lindsten denied that she had heard that – that she could only pay the 2012 warrants.

"I am not questioning your ability. If there is a problem, it is timeliness," Mr. Patton said. "The first report was a negative \$300,000 balance. We are responsible on how we spend the taxpayer funds – are we spending money that isn't there?"

"It's not my fault," Mrs. Jenik said. "I have been fixing problems and yes, I make mistakes but I am fed up with everyone pointing

fingers. It isn't always me that is causing the issues."

"There is no working relationship between the clerk and treasure office," Ms. Lindsten said. "You will not work with me. If the information came from the commissioners, I thought you might take it better."

Obviously, said Mr. Patton, there is communication and personality problems. I expect professionalism out of everyone.

No matter what the problem, said Ernie Ketzner, commissioner, it doesn't help to point fingers. If there is a problem squaring up the books then we need to have our books done on the weekend of the year end.

"It was not my fault," Mrs. Jenik said again.

I am not questioning your work ethics, Mr. Patton said. We have a problem and we will work diligently to resolve it. We need to provide the best services we can.

I just want good professional work ethics between everyone, added Brett Poling, commissioner. I respect what you are trying to do but we have a responsibility.

Mr. Patton told Mrs. Jenik that he was sorry if she took offense. This was not vindictive, he said, it was done for concern of operations. Whether you chose to believe it or not – that is your choice.

Mr. Patton also told Mrs. Jenik that one of her employees was not bondable. For your sake, he said, I hope things go well.