Rural post offices get reprieve from U.S. Senate

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conducts the individual post office feasibility studies – and stops the closure of any post offices until that happens. I am hopeful the House will consider this bill in a timely fashion."

When the Senate opened discussion of the bill on Tuesday a budgetary point of order by Sen. Jim Sessions of Alabama, threatened to stop the entire process by saying the bill would violate the debt limit agreement reached in August.

Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, ranking Republican on the Homeland Security Committee and cosponsor of the Post Office bill, argued the bill did not violate the debt agreement because none of the revenue from the Postal Service is taxpayer dollars, but rather revenue from stamps and postage paid to the post office.

Sen. Joe Lieberman of Connecticut, chair of the Homeland Security Committee and main sponsor of the post office bill agreed with Sen. Collins and asked the Senators to approve a budget waiver to cover the point of order.

On a roll call vote the Senate approved the waiver by the same final 62-37 vote and proceeded to the 39 amendments. Both Kansas Senators Moran and Roberts voted with the

majority

One of the first amendments proposed was by Sen. John McCain of Arizona who suggested the whole Postal Service question be turned over to a special commission tasked with making recommendations for closing post offices or processing center as a program similar to the military base closing commission of recent years for determining

military bases. The McCain amendment was defeated on a roll call vote 30-69, with Moran and Roberts both voting against.

the closure of excess or unneeded

The Senate approved eight amendments on Tuesday (some of which were approved by voice vote), generally introduce prerequisites to closing postal offices.

Those approved on voice votes include an amendment by Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) to allow communities to streamline aspects of local postal offices, like how many hours they are open. An amendment introduced by Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) requires the United States Postal Rate Commission to consider methodology and costs of local mail processing reports before any changes to postal facilities.

An amendment introduced by Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), approved by voice vote, "prohibits" the postal of the Postal Service to retire. This

or all-together closing certain postal offices. Similarly, an amendment by Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.), approved by voice vote, introduces a limit on how many postal offices in rural areas can be closed without meeting certain requirements.

Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla) introduced an amendment, approved by voice vote, which requires the mail service to post all service spending online. Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) introduced an amendment modifying spending for closing postal service facilities. The amendment, approved by voice vote, caps spending for conferences by all federal agencies, including the USPS.

Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) introduced an amendment meant to exclude closing postal offices or make changes to postal services that would change the outcome of elections through affecting votes made through the mail.

Sen. Michael Bennet of Colorado's amendment creates a commission of "citizen's service protection advocates" charged with representing Americans' public interest of the mail service. Bennet's amendment was approved by voice vote.

Among those defeated on Tuesday was a Coburn amendment to require retirement-eligible employees partisan lines with most Republicans voting in favor – including Moran and Roberts – while a few joined the Democrats to defeat the amendment.

Another by Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.) proposed to strike the limitations on changes to mail delivery schedule to give the Postal Service more than two years to move to a five-day delivery schedule. The present bill allows the Postal Service to drop Saturday delivery after two years. The amendment failed on a 43-56 roll call vote. The last vote on Tuesday was on Sen. Rand Paul's (R-Ky.) amendment to allow others to put products in mailboxes without it being a crime. His amendment was defeated on a roll call 35-64 vote with Moran and Roberts voting in favor.

Under Senate rules all the amendments and the final vote on the bill required 60 votes to pass.

On Wednesday the Senate went through the remaining 22 amendments in about two and one half hours with a majority being agreed to by voice vote. Amendments rejected by roll call were mostly along party lines including amendments to stop unions from spending dues for political purposes without prior approval of the members. It was pointed out the postal employees are in Benson, Minn., hailed the Sen-

service from cutting the workforce failed on a 33-65 vote mostly along not required to join a union, but once ate's vote as a critical step toward they have agreed it is up to the union restoring the U.S. Postal Service to leadership to spend the money. That issue was defeated on a party line roll call 46-53 vote with Moran and Roberts voting in favor.

Another amendment was to prohibit collective bargaining by postal employees. Sen. Collins said the postal employees have had collective bargaining rights for more than 30 years and this was beyond the scope of the present bill. The required to get this far demonstrates amendment failed on a 23-76 vote, with Moran and Roberts voting against.

When the final amendments had been passed Sen, Lieberman said he wanted to thank the senators for working together to produce a fair and reasonable bill.

"This effort was to bring about a bipartisan bill to bring necessary changes to help save the Postal Service," he said.

Sen. Collins said the odds of getting the final 60 votes would be better if she put her final statement in the record. She said the process had proven the U.S. Senate can tackle and enormous problem in a bipartisan way and make progress in a great way.

National Newspaper Association he said. President Reed Anfinson, publisher of the Swift County Monitor-News

soundness.

"A new postal reform law is still far from reality," Anfinson said, "but the work done in the Senate this week and last week represents a new commitment by our nation's leaders to maintaining universal service while undertaking much needed repairs on our nation's postal system. The two week debate how challenging it is to find the right solutions. But we are on the way, at long last."

Association Postal Committee Chair Max Heath, who provided inspiration and technical assistance to the association's Congressional Action Team, said he was heartened by the bill's passage.

"No legislation on a system as complex as USPS will be perfect, but the leadership of Collins and Lieberman in establishing continued viable service for mailers lays the groundwork for USPS to pursue meaningful restructuring. Newspapers must have a delivery system they can count on. The bill gives our members assurance Congress is taking our concerns seriously,"

State Legislature back to work

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district lines either 'valid' or 'invalid.'"

The Legislature also has to draw new lines for the U.S. House of Representatives. Billinger said the problem with the congressional map is that Wichita and Johnson counties want to keep their districts and the 2nd District wants to keep Junction City and Manhattan. However the 1st District needs to pick up more territory to bring its population up to equal the other three. Billinger said some proposals have it taking the counties along the northern border with Nebraska all the way to Wyandotte County. Another would have it pick up counties along the southern border with Oklahoma.

The Big 1st doesn't want that, Billinger said. The

better way would be to pick up territory in the center of the state, going south of Junction City all the way to Topeka. That way, he said, it would pick up more rural territory, keeping similar counties in the district from one end to the other.

Redistricting isn't the only business left before the Legislature. Budget negotiations are ongoing, but Billinger said he didn't anticipate any hold-ups there. However, he said, the House may delay final voting on the budget to motivate the Senate to get redistricting finished.

The Legislature also has to pass education funding, a reform package for the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System and the KanCare proposal – a replacement for Medicaid.

Goodland Police Department to enforce address number ordinance

is planning heavier enforcement of building address numbers starting next month.

Police Chief Cliff Couch said it has recently come to the department's attention that many residences within the city limits are not in compliance with the city ordinance numbers may seem unimportant, comply with the ordinance. Howregarding the numbering of houses and buildings.

The ordinance requires that the owner of each building place the numerical address of that building in a "conspicuous" place. The to locate the house where their help

The Goodland Police Department numbers must be at least 3 inches is needed. They waste valuable time tall. Although the ordinance does not specify exactly where the numbers must be placed, the department utes they waste looking for the right recommends that the numbers be placed by the door or somewhere on the front of the house.

"Although the displaying of these to a \$25 per day fine for failure to it is imperative to public safety," Couch said. "When the numerical enforcement action for a month in address of a residence isn't visible, order to give residents a chance to it is difficult for police officers, firefighters, and medical personnel

trying to locate the right residence. In emergency situations, the minhouse could mean the difference between life and death."

The ordinance provides for up ever, the city will not be taking any bring their homes into compliance.



