

By Carolyn Lee

The Imperial Republican

The US Postal Service (USPS) is considering changes to retail hours at 13,000 post offices nationwide, which include the Enders and Champion Post Offices.

USPS will conduct an evaluation process of the proposed reduced hours over the next two years. The evaluation will consist of a customer survey and a public meeting.

Until these meetings are complete, no changes will be made, according to Brian Sperry, regional spokesman for the Denver USPS office.

Sperry said meetings for the Enders and Champion postal patrons haven't been scheduled yet. "I don't know when the survey will be sent out or the meeting scheduled, but it will be in the next two years," he said Monday.

The survey will allow postal patrons four options, he said.

The first will be to keep the post office open with reduced hours.

The second will be to close the post office and offer curbside delivery.

The third will be to establish a village post office in an existing business.

The fourth will be to close the post office and provide post office box service in a nearby existing post office.

Sperry said that except for option #1, more than 60 percent of the community will need to request one of the other three options for them to be accepted.

The surveys will be sent out 30 days prior to the community meeting, Sperry said, and must be returned to USPS 14 days prior to the meeting.

Third District Congressman Adrian Smith urges constituents to participate in the survey. "Your input will be considered in the final decision. Nebraskans can contact my office if they have questions or concerns," he said.

Sperry said that the USPS is proposing to cut the Enders retail hours from six to two, and the Champion retail hours from eight to four.

"The hours are based on the office workload and usage by the community," he stated. "We will also ask what time of day patrons want the office to be open."

Because of the large number of post offices across the nation being considered for reduced hours, Sperry said it will take all two years for USPS to "work through the surveys and community meetings. We plan to keep the post offices open in some form."

There will be no change in Saturday hours, he added.

Other post offices in the area affected by the proposal include Hayes Center, Wallace, Venango, Madrid, Elsie, Stratton, Palisade and Max.