Proposed plan does not include post office boxes

By Jan Schultz
The Imperial Republican

Saturday mail delivery may become a thing of the past in many areas of the country if a U.S. Postal Service (USPS) plan becomes reality in August.

On Feb. 6, the USPS announced plans to transition to a new delivery schedule Aug. 5 that will stop Saturday delivery to street addresses.

However, due to large package volume, the USPS plan will continue parcel deliveries six days a week.

Imperial Postmaster Jerry Lines said Imperial Post Office boxholders will see hardly any changes since the plan does not include post office boxes. That would also include the Champion Post Office.

Patrick Donahoe, Postmaster General and CEO, in a statement, said, “Once implemented during August 2013, mail delivery to street addresses will occur Monday through Friday. Packages will continue to be delivered six days per week.

“Mail addressed to PO boxes will continue to be delivered on Saturdays. Post offices currently open on Saturdays will remain open on Saturdays,” he continued.

“We really won’t see any changes here (in town),” Lines said.

There are several locations in the city limits of Imperial where people have rural boxes and pick up their mail there.

Those are considered part of the rural routes. It’s probable all rural boxholders will not have Saturday mail delivery, if the proposals go unchanged.

Even though USPS has said packages will be delivered Monday though Saturday, Lines wasn’t certain if that will include rural route boxholders, including those in town.

“That’s a little iffy yet,” he said last week.

Lines said he’s had no official direction yet from USPS officials on what all the proposals mean for rural areas like here.

The announcement earlier this month is a proposed plan at this time, coming from the Postmaster General and the USPS board of governors.

The plan still has to get approval from the postal unions, as well as Congress, before it goes into effect in August, Lines said.

A key part of postal worker contracts in the larger cities where mail is delivered house-to-house is that those mail carriers are paid based on six days of work, so contracts will have to be renegotiated, he said.

Over the past several years, the Postal Service has advocated shifting to a five-day delivery schedule for mail and packages.

However, strong growth in package delivery (14 percent volume increase since 2010) and projections of continued strong package growth in the next 10 years led to the revised approach to maintain package delivery six days a week.

The proposed changes are expected to save about $2 billion annually when fully in place, according to postal officials.

Since 2006, the USPS says it has reduced its annual costs by $15 billion through a 28 percent

reduction in labor force and consolidation of more than 200 processing locations.
USPS receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, relying on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.