

Changes at the post office

Written by By Beth Blakeman Associate Editor
Friday, 28 August 2020 05:43



How they affect New Mexico

Voting by mail will be the choice for many voters this election season.

In McKinley County that will be possible despite the contentious climate that surrounds the practice in some parts of the country.

USPS Communications Specialist Rod Spurgeon said all letter mail in New Mexico gets processed in a single place — at the Albuquerque Processing and Distribution Center where he works. That is also where the sorting machines are located.

Spurgeon told the *Gallup Sun* Aug. 18 that two sorting machines have been powered down at the processing center.

A delivery barcode sorter like the one pictured above, has a maximum processing capacity of 36K mail pieces per hour.

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“If we need the capacity of the machines we’re not using, we can certainly turn them back on, but we’re only using about half the processing capacity we have,” Spurgeon said. “Mail volume has plunged in the last 20 years, dropping from 103.5 billion pieces of First-Class Mail in 2000 to 54.9 billion pieces in 2019.”

On the subject of collection boxes, Spurgeon said, “collection boxes haven’t been removed in New Mexico.”

Nationally, Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, who was criticized by postal officials in several states for banning overtime, removing collection boxes, and decommissioning sorting equipment, stated Aug. 18 that he would pause plans to change mail services until after the 2020 Presidential Election.

“The Postal Service is ready today to handle whatever volume of election mail it receives this fall,” DeJoy said. “...we will deliver the nation’s election mail on time and within our well-established service standards. The American public should know that this is our number one priority between now and election day.”

DeJoy said that until the election is concluded:

- 1) Retail hours at post offices will not change.
- 2) Mail processing equipment and blue collection boxes will remain where they are.
- 3) No mail processing facilities will be closed.
- 4) Overtime will continue to be approved as needed.

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DeJoy, who took the reins on June 16, added that effective Oct. 1, the post office will engage standby resources to satisfy any unforeseen demand.

“I came to the Postal Service to make changes to secure the success of this organization and its long-term sustainability. I believe significant reforms are essential to that objective, and work toward those reforms will commence after the election,” he said.

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