

September 2, 2008

Canada Post Strategic Review Committee
Submitted Electronically

ATTN: Dr. Robert Campbell, Chair

Dr. Campbell,

It has come to our attention that Canada Post is currently undertaking a strategic review of Canada Post operations. On behalf of the municipal council for the Municipal District of Big Lakes (a rural municipality located in northern Alberta) I hereby submit this letter to be included in your deliberations.

In reviewing the Terms of Reference being utilized by the Strategic Review Committee it becomes apparent that the main concerns of our municipal council relate to the guiding principle which is worded as “Canada Post must maintain a universal, effective and economically viable postal service”.

Within the above noted guiding principle there appears to be a fundamental contradiction. It is expected that your committee will have great difficulty in balancing a “universal” postal system with an “economically viable” postal service. In balancing these two contradictory principles, your committee may very well be tempted to suggest the elimination of many small remote postal outlets. I submit to you that such action would have devastating effects on rural and remote communities. In many rural and remote communities the post office becomes a morning meeting place for residents. This creates a close-knit community which adds to the long-term sustainability of the community. If, for example, the post office were closed in favour of a more regional post office the community would lose a certain amount of connectivity.

I do not envy your responsibilities in weighing the many issues noted in the terms of reference document. I understand the need for Canada Post to be financially viable, and I accept that rural remote postal outlets may not be the most financially efficient part of the postal service. However, I submit to you that prior to making any changes to rural and remote services you should remove yourself from the financial indicators and consider what the post office offers to these small communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Alvin Billings
Reeve
Municipal District of Big Lakes