Rural Post Offices and the Communities that rely on them are being abandoned

The results of a survey of municipalities and band councils on the closure of 1700 rural post offices by Canada Post, carried out by Anderson Consulting for the Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association.

April 2014
The Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association  

The Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association was founded in 1902 in Stonewall, Manitoba as a grassroots organization dedicated to improving the working conditions of Postmasters in rural Manitoba. CPAA grew from a local organization to a national association that is the second largest bargaining unit representing employees of Canada Post Corporation.

Anderson Consulting  

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A comment from our survey:

“Closing the Boulter Post Office has adversely impacted our community in not only having lost its sense of identity but its closure has also created a sense of isolation for many of our seniors. Our community population is 80% seniors and with Boulter being a rural area, the post office was a place for doing business while having contact and social interaction with neighbours and friends. This closure has resulted in increased travel and expense for our residents of whom many are pensioners living only on Old Age Security payments.

The closure has increased the carbon footprint due to the additional travel and as a result has the potential for a detrimental impact on our environment.

Our residents and business owners have begun to use courier delivery services as a means to continue to send parcels or mail which also adds a greater expense to their operating budget...

Thank you for the opportunity to express our concerns regarding the closure of the Boulter post office. Rural Ontario has traditionally and historically used postal service as a means to communicate and do business outside of our communities. We sincerely hope this necessary service will be offered once again to the residents of Boulter, Ontario.”

 بصورة: Bonnie Adams,
Reeve of Carlow/Mayo Township
INTRODUCTION

Much has been made, and rightly so, in the press, on the political scene, and in terms of reactions of communities, seniors, people with disabilities and unions of the recent announcements made by Canada Post of its Five-point Action Plan in December 2013.  

Here are the five announcements in the plan and here is what they really mean.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Canada Post calls it</th>
<th>What it really means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Community mailboxes</td>
<td>End home delivery. The only Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) country to do so! Penalizing particularly seniors and people with disabilities in a winter country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A new approach to pricing Lettermail to take effect March 31, 2014</td>
<td>Increase stamp prices by almost 60% at once.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Expanding convenience through postal franchises</td>
<td>Close down post offices and save staff costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Streamlining operations</td>
<td>Increase capital and machinery, vehicles etc. and reduce workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Addressing the cost of labour</td>
<td>Cut 8000 good jobs mainly in the letter carrier field</td>
</tr>
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</table>

If this wasn’t bad enough, what many Canadians do not know, is that Canada Post has been pursuing another cost cutting objective for more than 30 years. Since the start of the eighties, Canada Post has closed down over 1700 federally run (Canada Post administered) post offices mainly in rural Canada. Now some of these closures were justified, when, for example, whole communities closed down due to the shutting down of a military base or a mine operation or simply because of depopulation occurred over time. But those reasons for closures seem to represent a tiny minority proportion of the closures.

Most closures seem to have been done simply to save money by shutting down offices to consolidate operations in one region or by transferring the service from a federally run business to a franchise operation. It is important to emphasize that while many of the closed post offices have been converted to franchise operations, most of the closed post offices have been shut down permanently, forcing many customers to travel an average of 13 kilometres each way and, in many cases much further, to carry out many simple postal transactions.

1 See Appendix 2 for the full text of this announcement
Canada Post policy on rural post offices is governed by a Moratorium on Rural Closures introduced in 1994 following public protest against a huge numbers of closures. But while most of the closings we are looking at occurred before 1995, there has been a continuation of closures in the 2000s in spite of the moratorium.

In Canada Post’s Canadian Postal Services Charter (2009), the section “Convenient Access to Postal Services” reads:

9. *Canada Post will provide an extensive network for accessing postal services that includes retail postal outlets, stamp shops and street letterboxes, as well as access to information and customer service through the Canada Post’s website and call centres.*

10. *Canada Post will provide retail postal outlets, including both corporate post offices and private dealer operated outlets which are conveniently located and operated, so that:*
   - 98 percent of consumers will have a postal outlet within 15 km;
   - 88 percent of consumers will have a postal outlet within 5 km; and
   - 78 percent of consumers will have a postal outlet within 2.5 km.

11. *The moratorium on the closure of rural post offices is maintained. Situations affecting Canada Post personnel (e.g., retirement, illness, death, etc.) or Canada Post infrastructure (e.g., fire or termination of lease, etc.) may, nevertheless, affect the ongoing operation of a post office.*

The Charter reaffirms the moratorium on the closures of rural post offices in point 11 but allows a great deal of wiggle room as to the interpretation of when a closing can be justified. This has allowed closures to continue as evidenced from our survey. Point 10 standards are very loose as only 18.9% of the population is rural. This means most rural people (the 12% of the total population who are not in the category of 5 km or less) will have a more than 5 km standard (5-15 km) which is quite far, and more than 10% of the rural population (2% of the total population) will have to go more than 15 km!

**Our Survey**

In order to find out what have been the effects of closing 1700 post offices, particularly on rural and small town Canada, we sent surveys to 1635 of these communities (the ones for which we could find complete mailing information) in which there once was a federally run post office which had been closed down. The survey was mailed out to community leaders: mayors, reeves, councilors or band chiefs who headed up municipalities, district, reserves or other locations in which a federal post office, owned and operated by Canada Post was closed down over the period from 1981-2013. The long period over which the closures occurred meant that some of today’s respondents knew little about the closing when it had occurred decades ago.

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We sent a survey first by mail with a stamped return envelope and then followed up by email or telephone to the mayor, reeve, band chief or councilor for the municipality, district or reserve in which the post office which had been closed down was located.

We had a total of 377 replies to the survey which gave us a very respectable reply rate of 23%.

The highest rate of replies was in Quebec 110/245 or a 45% rate of reply. In Newfoundland, the rate was 25/94 or 26.5% and was lowest in New Brunswick at 7%. The low rate in New Brunswick is because many of the closed post offices were in unorganized territories which are administered directly by the province. While the province was contacted directly and was interested in helping, few replies have been received.

This paper describes what we found out overall and by province and territory.

What we found, is that, overall, shutting down these post offices has been, as more than one respondent said, “another nail in the coffin” for rural communities.

Canada is, surprisingly, for being the second largest country in the world by area and having one of the lowest population densities per square kilometer, one of the most highly urbanized societies in the world. The number of Canadians living in rural areas “areas with fewer than 1,000 inhabitants and a population density below 400 people per square kilometer” (Statcan definition of rural) has been declining rapidly for years. Today, even as our overall population grows to its highest number ever, in the 2011 census, our rural population fell to 18.9% of the total population, its lowest level ever. This is far below most countries except the UK and USA.

Canada’s rural population, as Statcan notes, is also “older than the urban population. Within predominantly rural regions, 15% of the population is senior (65 years of age and over) compared to 13% in predominantly urban regions. Canada’s rural population is aging faster than their urban counterparts in terms of the change in the share of the population that is senior.”

Thus, closing down rural post offices particularly inconveniences this very large number of rural seniors.

Closing down rural post offices, the results of this survey would contend, has only contributed to the process of hurting growth in rural Canada. In an era where, for the first time, the potential exists for rural communities to be more closely linked to services and goods across the country and around the world, closing down rural post offices cannot help. We are in a new era, where, for the first time, many kinds of work and many types of businesses are portable and moveable, due to Internet connection.

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Most businesses, more than ever, need access to reasonable cost full postal services to send and receive goods and services, to carry out advertising and to correspond with customers. Most citizens in rural communities now have the opportunity to order goods and services through the Internet, but, if post offices are not nearby, and if costs are prohibitive, this can be a problem. As many respondents to our survey have noted, closing rural postal services, or at least weakening them, can have particular negative effects on seniors and people with disabilities, and on anyone who does not have or cannot use vehicles to travel to post offices.

**Rural population by province and territory**

![Graph showing rural population by province and territory in 2006 and 2011. The graph compares the proportion (%) of rural population across different provinces and territories, with a comparison of national averages shown as well.](image-url)
Proportion of the population living in rural areas, Canada, 1851 to 2011


The closure of so many post offices has, surprisingly, not made major headlines, partly because it has been carried out gradually over the last three decades. For some communities, the closures have had little or no effect, where the community is gone or highly diminished or where other postal outlets are nearby. But for many other communities, where there is no postal outlet nearby, the closures have been a severe blow to the body and soul of the rural community.
OVERALL ANALYSIS

Our Results: A dozen take-aways from the survey

The results we have found in the survey are varied province by province, but, as we shall show in the following pages, through the answers and comments from the communities, there are several major takeaways.

1. Many communities are left with no postal outlet. They do not even have a franchise service. 58% of our respondents have no post office.

2. Where there was a postal outlet, even if it was a franchise, the results were usually better.

3. Many respondents feel that the closures have had profound effects on their community in a negative sense on both business and community life. 24% of all communities were deeply dissatisfied with postal service.

4. Many people in many communities have to travel long distances to get full postal services. The cost and onus is put on thousands of citizens to use full postal services. Costs of gas and time are downloaded to residents to access mail services in other locations. The average distance is 13.1 km to reach a post office or 26.2 km return.

5. The closing of post offices is another strain on the environment as it means multiple trips by residents to do postal business.

6. Closing postal outlets has especially onerous effects on seniors, the disabled and those without use of a vehicle.

7. Many communities are not happy with the Community Mail Box (CMB) locations and upkeep. Many complained about the fact that in winter the CMB locations were not cleared and that they were open to rain and snow. Many were unhappy that locations of CMBs were not discussed by Canada Post.

8. Many communities complained that Canada Post was unwilling to discuss alternatives to the post office closures or to CMBs.

9. Many complained that in some outlets the municipality or band had to take over the running of the postal outlet and the costs were simply being downloaded to the municipality or band administration. One respondent complained that the $6000 per year provided to run the franchise post office was far too low.

10. The closing of many post offices meant the loss of a Canada Post employee in a rural community often with few good jobs. The transfer to a franchise outlet can also mean lower salary and benefits for the outlet employee. At the same time a franchise outlet can help to maintain a rural store.

11. Many would like to see the existing services improved. Many complained about the length of time it took to receive a letter sent within the same community or to a nearby location.
12. Many would like to have other services offered at a postal outlet such as banking, prescriptions, federal and provincial services. 60% of respondents wanted other services.
## Overall Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province and territories</th>
<th>Surveys sent</th>
<th>Total surveys received</th>
<th>No postal outlet</th>
<th>Franchise outlet</th>
<th>Avg. kms to a PO</th>
<th>Satisfaction in communities with no PO (1 is very satisfied and 5 is very unsatisfied)</th>
<th>Satisfaction in communities with a franchise postal outlet (1 is very satisfied and 5 is very unsatisfied)</th>
<th>Levels of deep dissatisfaction (4 or 5) in all</th>
<th>Want other services</th>
<th>Number want other services</th>
<th>Effects on small business in closed PO locations (1 is very much and 5 is very little)</th>
<th>Effects on economic stability in closed PO locations (1 is very much and 5 is very little)</th>
<th>Loss of identity in closed PO locations (1 is very much and 5 is very little)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>22 (11.6%)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
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<td>13</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>MB</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>33 (22.8%)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>NB</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>4 (7%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFLD</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>25 (26.5%)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>16 (16.5%)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>ON</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>80 (19.2%)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>66.3%</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2 (22%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>QC</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>110 (44.9%)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>SK</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>59 (24.4%)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Territories</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1 (7.6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>CANADA</td>
<td>1635</td>
<td>377 (23.1%)</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>3.5</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall Results: Let’s look at Canada

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province and territories</th>
<th>Surveys sent</th>
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Of the surveys received, 199 or 52.8% came from communities where there was no longer any post office; while 178 or 47.2% came from communities where there was now a franchise post office or, in a very few cases, the federally owned post office had been reopened.

The average distance of a one way trip to a post office, from a community with no post office, averages out to be 13.1 kilometres or 26.2 kilometres return. With a Honda Civic, the best-selling car in Canada in 2013, driving there and back would, according to the Federal Government records, burn 1.3 litres of fuel at highway driving or cost, in fuel alone, $1.68 at $1.29 a litre (which was the 2013 average fuel cost). If one were to visit the post office once a week, this could cost $87.20 per person or family per year. The annual drain in terms of costs on communities with no post office is thus quite substantial.

Overall levels of satisfaction with postal services were not very high. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very satisfied and 5 very unsatisfied, the average level per province in communities with no post office was 2.9. Provinces with the highest levels of dissatisfaction in those communities without a post office were Nova Scotia 3.4, Quebec 3.3 and Ontario 3.3. The most satisfied levels were found in Manitoba at 2.7 and Alberta 2.7. The levels of satisfaction in communities with a franchise outlet were generally higher at 2.5 average, except for Manitoba at 3.7.

90 communities registered at 4 or 5 (where 5 is very dissatisfied) in answering about levels of satisfaction with postal services. This means that these communities were very or quite unsatisfied. This is a high number of communities. Many of these responses came from communities where there was still a franchise postal outlet.

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211 or 60% of communities wanted additional services or some of the services at the post offices dramatically improved. This is a clear opening for Canada Post to move on such issues as offering postal banking and other government services.\(^5\)

Finally, when looking at the effects of these closings on small business, economic stability and community identity, the range is quite varied.

- Provinces which noted closings had a high effect on small business ranged (where 1 is very much to 5 very little) from a high rating of 2.6 in Quebec to low effects rating of 4 in Alberta.
- Economic stability (where 1 is very much effect to 5 very little effect) ranges from a 3.2 rating in Ontario and Quebec which means about half think there have been important effects to a 4.8 in Alberta.
- Community identity ranges from a 2.4 rating, which is very high perception of the loss of community identity due to closures, in Newfoundland to a 4.2 rating for Alberta which means little effect. Overall the 3.1 rating means about half of those in communities with closures in provinces and territories think the effects have been important.

Newfoundland and Labrador: “Closing a Postal Outlet in a community takes away part of the community's identity. The post office was in a private dwelling like all other postal outlets in the area. The person in the post office was a federal employee.” On the closing of Rodger's Cove in Gander Bay North LSD

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Newfoundland and Labrador had a high percentage response rate of surveys, 25/94 or 26.5% of the communities where the post office was closed. 17 of the 25 communities no longer had any form of postal outlet. Satisfaction regarding postal services was higher than, for example in Nova Scotia. On the other hand, some 76% of respondents wanted more services in the postal outlets. When asked about the effect on small business (where 1 is very much affected and 5 very little affected), the results were 3.6 and for economic stability 3.8. These results for communities with no postal outlet came in as “little” effect. But when asked about the loss of community identity, the 2.4/5 results showed communities saw very high effects, showing that many felt very touched by the loss of the post office.

Many stressed the inconvenience of no postal outlets for seniors and those without vehicles. Here are comments from different communities on the effects on seniors.

- “It is very inconvenient for seniors and anyone without a vehicle to pick up or send mail or buy stamps or money orders.” Canning’s Cove
- “Inconvenient and expensive especially for our many seniors.” Norris Arm Northside, in North Arm North LSD
- “One less person employed. Not good for seniors and those who don’t have their own vehicles.” Rodger’s Cove, Gander Bay North LSD
- “With an aging population the loss of our postal outlet was detrimental. Many seniors do not have transportation and relied on the postal outlet to pay bills and to send and receive packages.” St. Joseph’s Salmonier, in St. Joseph’s
• “The closure of St. Anthony East has left residents who don't have vehicles finding alternative ways of getting to the retail outlet several kilometres away. Very inconvenient for older citizens and people with disabilities.” St Anthony East closure, St, Anthony

• Even one respondent, who thought things were generally fine, mentioned seniors who might not have direct deposit as being affected.

Four gave generally favourable comments, particularly from those who still have a franchise outlet:

• “Very little effect. The retail outlet is open to 9 PM which is some advantage for people who pick up their mail late.” Comfort Cove-Newstead

• “We have 2 post offices operating in our community. One is a standalone post office operated by the federal government and the other is operated from a retail outlet. We have no problems with the service provided at both outlets. As a matter of fact, the postal service operating from the retail outlet provides longer access per day than the one operated by the government.” Durrell in Twillingate

• “Not much. Just make it another stop when we go out of town.” Jackson’s Cove, Jackson’s Cove-Langdon’s Cove-Silverdale LSD

• “Northwest Brook was closed however residents use the Hillsview Post Office.” Northwest Brook in Random Sound West LSD

Another noted that Canada Post was not open to any changes to Community Mail Boxes:

• “After we went to community mail boxes we requested a canopy to be installed over the mailboxes on several occasions but we were denied. Is it possible that we can get one put in place now? The boxes freeze in the wintertime and the mail gets wet in heavy rain.” Canning’s Cove in Canning’s Cove LSD

One complained of the unfairness of the allocation of postal outlets:

• “As a chairperson in my community, I hear a lot of complaints about postal services in our community. I can drive out of my area for a distance of 36 km and see 3 postal services and we with nothing. One in George's Point, Clark's Head and Victoria Cove all within 20 km. You can drive anywhere in NL and see more post offices than you see in my area.” From the Main Point-Davidsville LSD (unincorporated community) about closure of Main Point.
Nova Scotia: “The closing of rural post offices is just another nail in the coffin of small communities in rural Nova Scotia.” On the Port Greville closure in the County of Cumberland

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<tr>
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<td>16 (16.5%)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
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</table>

Nova Scotia response rate was 16.5%. Nova Scotia respondents (81%) came mainly from locations with no postal outlets. In our research before the survey, we found that 75% of all the 97 locations closed now had no postal outlet. In a relatively compact province, the 20 plus kilometres return distance to reach a post office was remarkable. Two communities had to travel 50 kilometres return. The level of dissatisfaction with postal services from communities with no outlet was high at 3.4, while even those with a franchise outlet were just marginally satisfied at 2.7. A majority of all respondents (56.3%) wanted more services delivered.

Some of the communities expressed a great deal of dissatisfaction as to what happened by closing the postal outlet.

- “We have had a post office in our community since horse and wagon days. There is a huge void in our lives and services... Our community is an aging community. ... Folks lost their post office and most of all the community touch. It sure is missed.” (District of Guysborough on the closing of the Goldsboro post office) and it continued: “The office was our centre of communications. The last postmaster who retired on Sept. 29/13 had been at the job for over 40 years. Now we must travel many miles to pick up parcels and do our business. They will soon as customers find easier ways to do business. Couriers and computers don't leave you with no service.”

- “The process is very upsetting for all walks of life. Seniors, business, services, whole population. No place to buy postage stamps or express post envelopes that is nearby. Placement of Community Mail Boxes is unfair. Rural delivery was taken away from most. And if a rural mail box had to be moved in some cases it was less than 6 inches. P.S. I have to travel 19 km myself to be able to mail this back to you!!!” (Kemptville closing in the District of Yarmouth)
The comment, which perhaps sums it all up, came about the Port Greville closure in the County of Cumberland.

- “The closing of rural post offices is just another nail in the coffin of small communities in rural Nova Scotia. This now puts village against village for dollars. Canada Post does not seem to want to even deliver mail to our communities as we are being told to move our mail boxes or remove them all together after safe delivery for many years.”

- “Post offices are an important vehicle in rural communities. Small communities are struggling. Loss of post offices has an economic impact on rural Nova Scotia. The service is a unifying force in the country plus every job every salary is important to sustain rural Canada.” From the District of Shelburne on the Osborne Harbour closure.

- “Constituents are disappointed they lost the service of the post office…. My constituents were disappointed that Canada Post did not attempt to meet and discuss other options to the mail service. Our school board was willing to renovate their office so we could at least have our mail boxes inside a building. However, Canada Post did not want/did not make an effort to work with us.” Regarding Meteghan River closure in the District of Clare:

One comment blamed the poor service on Canada Post and on the union:

- “Canada Post is in crisis. This is no secret. Part of the problem is 1) the cost to mail small light parcels is exorbitant 2) The Union (the tail) is wagging the Head (Post Office). Many employees are just plain rude 3) The computerized equipment is very slow. Have to stand there too long while they measure with a tape measure, weigh and then wait for the info to be calculated. Ridiculous!” Fisherman’s Harbour, District of St, Mary’s

As for comments and not ratings, only one comment was overall happy with the service.
New Brunswick: “People are using Internet and emails more and more; this is sure to have a direct impact on Canada Post.” Rivièr du Portage

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NB</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>4 (7%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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As mentioned previously, the majority of closed post offices were in unorganized communities under the direct supervision of the provincial government. While we contacted the government directly and they did send out an email to all staff, we received few returns. While the results of the 4 are posted above, we did not want to extrapolate for the province from these small numbers.

Prince Edward Island

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<th>Loss of identity in closed PO locations (1 is very much and 5 is very little)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PEI</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2 (22%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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With 2, Prince Edward Island was the province with the fewest total number of returns which makes it difficult to paint a portrait with survey data. One hypothesis is that while PEI is the most rural of all provinces in terms of percentage of rural population, its geographic small size makes location of other post offices within reach for many citizens.
Quebec: “The closure of a post office in a municipality always has a negative effect and it is the whole population which feels it. It has to travel out of the village and incur extra charges to obtain an essential service. Potential new residents are little inclined to settle in a municipality which offers few services.” St-Marcellin

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QC</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>110 (44.9%)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Quebec has the highest percentage of responses to the survey. 110 or 44.9%, of all municipalities contacted, responded. This is an extraordinary rate of response and shows the interest that Quebecers have in preserving and sustaining their postal services. It is by far the highest rate of response of any province.

42.7% or 47 of the community responses came from places which no longer had a post office. The average distance to reach a post office for these communities was 12.6 kilometres each way. The rate of satisfaction was 3.3 in those communities with no post office (meaning tending towards unsatisfied) and higher in those communities with a franchise postal outlet at 2.1. 24 communities of all kinds (14 with no post office and 10 with a franchise postal outlet) expressed a high degree of dissatisfaction (4 or 5) with their postal services. This represents more than 22% of all communities which is a high number.

There was also a high rate (59%) of request for more services. For example, 34 communities (31%) wanted banking services, which was surprising in that at, until recently, Quebec has had a very large credit union network in rural areas. The effect of the post office closings on small business at 2.6 was the highest rating in all provinces and the effect on community identity in communities with closed post offices at 2.8 was amongst the highest in all provinces.
With so many respondents from one province, the number of comments was also large. Here are some of the views expressed.

Many expressed their opinion on the negative effects of the closings.

- “Closing a post office and leaving only a small postal outlet at the handy store is unpractical and costly. It is as if the villages are losing an important part of their ‘downtown’ and this leaves us with a less lively village.” Saints-Anges

- “The closure of a post office in a municipality always has a negative effect and it is the whole population which feels it. It has to travel out of the village and incur extra charges to obtain an essential service. Potential new residents are little inclined to settle in a municipality which offers few services.” St-Marcellin

- “We miss our post office a lot. We ask ourselves whether we will see a post office again in our municipality. A simple post office like we had before for basic needs would be very much appreciated.” Ste-Louise

Some expressed the fact that the closing meant little as there was a post office nearby

- “The closure has had little impact because the other post office is 3 kilometres away.”
  Cap St-Ignace Station, in Cap St-Ignace

Some mentioned that the previous post office was not profitable.

- “Because it was not profitable, the franchise postal outlet was closed last year.”
  Guérin

Or that there were not enough persons left in the community to have a post office.

- “The residents have adapted to the reality of the closure of the post offices. They often go to the neighbouring town for postal and other services. Needs in terms of postal services have been reduced because of development in information technologies. As well the size of the population base served does not justify an increase in services offered.”
  Comments in a letter about the Louvicourt closing in Val d’Or
Some were very satisfied.

- “We are very satisfied with the services and reception in our post office.”
  Brownsburg Annexe, Brownsburg-Chatham

Many had criticisms of the way Canada Post operates its services.

- “We would like to be able to send registered letters, send parcels and flyers which are sent to the whole community without having to go to the neighbouring village.”
  Saints-Anges

- “What does the most damage is the transfer of the village post office to a distant area far from many people here. These people make no or little use of the new postal outlet. The closure has distanced people from those folks who live in neighbouring regions.”
  Ste-Blandine, Rimouski

- “The closure of our post office was very hard for seniors. We are now ten kilometres from the nearest post office. People have stopped using this service and there has been a loss of jobs.” St-Gerard, Weedon

- “The postal service is slow, not very flexible and mediocre. The quality of information furnished by the post office also leaves a lot to be desired.” St-Marc, Saint-Marc-sur-Richelieu

Two respondents offered a solution.

- “The postal service is essential to a community and has an impact on the development of municipalities because potential new residents are looking for this kind of service. As well, we cannot benefit from Internet shopping. Putting certain services together would be an alternative.” St-Narcisse-de-Rimouski

- Another respondent talked of keeping the postal service by having it deliver mail to 50% of citizens Monday and Thursday, and to the other 50% on Tuesday and Friday.
Ontario: “The closure of the post office has taken away the personal touch from the community. It is hard to talk to a metal box.... Bring back our post office! We have lost our identity.” David Shulist, Mayor of Wilno

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<tr>
<td>ON</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>80 (19.2%)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>66.3%</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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Ontario responses, at 19.2%, were on the low side but this must be balanced against the high number of overall closures at a total of 417. Of the 80 respondents, 46 or 58% have no postal outlet at all in their locations.

Average travel distance in these “no postal outlet” communities in Ontario to get to a post office is over 13 kilometres each way, and many have to travel 20, or even 30 kilometres, to buy a stamp, pick up or mail a parcel, as well as do anything more such as buy and send a money order.

These closures have severely affected community life in many of the areas. The 2.7 rating in terms of loss of identity amongst those without a postal outlet is the third highest next only to Newfoundland and Labrador and BC. One of the most incisive analyses of the effects of the loss of a post office on community life comes from Boulter. The comments touch not only on the effects on community life, seniors and businesses but bring out the very true commentary of the increased environmental carbon footprint from all the driving to the nearest postal outlet and as well as to the Community Mail Boxes.

- “Closing the Boulter post office has adversely impacted our community in not only having lost its sense of identity but its closure has also created a sense of isolation for many of our seniors. Our community population is 80% seniors and with Boulter being a rural area, the post office was a place for doing business while having contact and social interaction with neighbours and friends. This closure has resulted in increased travel and expense for our residents of whom many are pensioners living only on Old Age Security payments. The closure has increased the carbon footprint due to the additional travel and as a result has the potential for a detrimental impact on our environment.
Our residents and business owners have begun to use courier delivery services as a means to continue to send parcels or mail which also adds a greater expense to their operating budget. ...Thank you for the opportunity to express our concerns regarding the closure of the Boulter Post Office. Rural Ontario has traditionally and historically used postal service as a means to communicate and do business outside of our communities. We sincerely hope this necessary service will be offered once again to the residents of Boulter, Ontario.” Bonnie Adams, Reeve of the Township of Carlow/Mayo

- “It felt like the heart was removed from our community. Our Community was deeply saddened when the post office was closed... The miles we now drive to undertake these simple services are deflating our area.” on the closure of Westwood in Asphodel-Norwood

- “The closure of the post office has taken away the personal touch from the community. It is hard to talk to a metal box... Bring back our post office! We have lost our identity. Wilno is world famous for being Canada’s first Kashubian and Polish Settlement. Our cultural identity is lost as far as the postal service goes.” David Shulist, Mayor of Wilno

- “With no Canada Post presence in town, people don’t think of using it, other than just mailing a simple letter or card. Even that is done reluctantly as they feel Canada Post abandoned them.” on the closure of Lucknow in Huron-Kinloss

- “Any shutdown of post office services has adverse effects: lose services, lose attraction for new residents and new business.” on the closure of Meldrum Bay, in Unorganized West Part Manitoulin

In one case, in Summerstown in South Glengarry, Canada Post first put in a franchise in 1989, and then the outlet was closed permanently in 2013.

- “Harder to communicate with friends, family, work. Also store closed in 2013 where it was. Would have added stability. The closure of the post office created economic instability as it was in a store it helped their business and the overall well-being of the community through positive interaction. ... We would take the post office back as it would help generate positive feelings and aid with economic development.”
Decline or absence of services

- Many communities are dissatisfied with the postal service. 20 communities out of 80 listed a 4 or 5 rating where 5 is very unsatisfied.
- 25 out of 80 or 31% wanted banking services
- 53% of all wanted all kinds of services, such as federal and provincial forms and licenses, to be available
- Many are concerned with delivery service. Sesekinika, Unorganized West Temiskaming District. “Do not get mail until after 1:30 PM therefore outgoing mail may not reach Swastika Post Office the same day. Parcels, stamps must be picked up 20 km away.”
- One municipality complained that Canada Post was not meeting its delivery standard of 2 days (in province) for the delivery of local mail.
- Another respondent complained of having to travel 30 kilometres one way to send or receive a parcel or to purchase stamps

CMBs, which Canada Post has promised to install now in every city, have many critics in terms of their state of maintenance, lighting and ability to use them in the rain and snow.

- “Residents complain about putting mail outside in rain and poor lighting.” Onaping closing in Greater Sudbury
Manitoba: “Manson closing was not a huge deal because everyone now just uses McAuley which is where people have to come for gas, groceries and such. But if the post office in McAuley were to close, it would be devastating to the community. People would have to travel at least 40 km to the next closest.” on the Manson closing in McAuley RM

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MB</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39.4%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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Manitoba returned 33 surveys out of 145 for a 22.8% rate of completion. Of these survey responses, 20/33 or 60.6% were from locations where there was no longer a post office of any kind, while 13 were from locations with a franchise postal outlet. The distance community members now have to travel to a full service post office outlet is 13 kilometres each way which is a very long distance. Levels of satisfaction with postal services in communities which no longer had a post office were comparatively high at 2.7 compared to those with a franchise outlet where the satisfaction level was 3.7 or quite unsatisfied. 11 communities or 36.7% had high levels of dissatisfaction. A moderate level of perception of the effects on business and community identity was found. Many (13) said they were little or only marginally affected.

Here is one comment from a community where there was a closure but the distance to the next is post office is only 3 miles.

- “All these services are provided in St. Malo 3 miles away or in St. Pierre (Bilingual Services Building 10 miles away) where we need to go anyway from groceries, garage, church, school, restaurants etc.” Dufrost, in De Salaberry RM

Another saw the situation as very stable.

- “When there from the municipality’s perspective we have not received any negative comments over the years regarding the current services offered by the post office outlet. Our post office is located in the Village of Lorette as was the previous post office and the current post office offers all the services requested of them.” Village of Lorette, in Taché RM
Others saw the closure of the post office as the start of a downward spiral which literally leads to the end of a community. Here are two remarkable testimonies:

- “We just want regular service. We want to be able to buy stamps, send and receive parcels, timely mail delivery, reliable mail service. ....The closure of the post office in Elgin was the beginning of the end for that community. Once people stopped being able to have regular postal service many people moved their mailing address to either Souris or Hartney. Since many people had to travel to another town for postal services anyway they started doing other business in other towns as well. The residents of Elgin that still get their mail delivered to a Community Mail Box in Elgin find it frustrating that it takes at least 3 days for mail to come from another town 20 km away and there is an awful lot of mail that gets "lost" and is either delivered weeks after being mailed or sometimes not at all.” on the closure of Elgin in Whitewater RM

- “When a post office is closed in a community, the identity of the community suffers. People usually pick up their mail every day or every other day which means they could also do other business in the community at the same time. Losing a post office is another nail in the coffin for small communities. It means travelling to larger communities for mail and in turn takes other business away as well.” Napinka closure in Brenda RM
Saskatchewan: “I believe a full service post office is the backbone of a community. Rural communities particularly are slowly dying as local businesses relocate in order to remain competitive.” Village of Pleasantdale

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<tr>
<td>SK</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>59 (24.4%)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
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Saskatchewan’s response rate of 59/242 or 24.4% is an excellent one and may be linked to the highest per capita number of closures of any province. The average one way distance to the nearest post office from communities with no post office is a very long 18.5 kilometres. More than half of respondents wanted more kinds of service at the post office.

26 respondents saw themselves as very satisfied or quite satisfied (1 or 2 rating) with existing postal services compared to 14 who were very unsatisfied or quite unsatisfied (4 or 5 rating).

Many noted the closures were justified as the communities had shrunk:

- “The closure did not affect Percival as the population was dwindling. Today the population is 2 people. There are many small communities like this which cannot support postal services.” Percival in RM Willowdale

One respondent criticized the amount that Canada Post gives to the village to run the post office. The respondent noted that this caused work burden on employees and financial burden on taxpayers, and went on to noted this put a strain on village taxpayers, as the amount Canada Post allots for this service is extremely low, and the village must absorb most of the cost.

Another complained of the quality of the service due to contracting out:

- “We find the quality and confidentiality of our services are very poor as our contractors who deliver our mail are not well compensated for their services and this shows in our service. Mail is constantly put in the wrong boxes. At least twice a month we receive..."
someone else's mail or someone gets our mail. The names and post office boxes are generally not wrong so carelessness in sorting is the main reason..... Some people have relocated their postal addresses to Stoughton because of this.” Forget

A few complained of the state of the Community Mail Boxes. One noted that the Community Mail Boxes work fine, except that they need to be more sheltered, because the boxes can freeze shut.

- “We have mail services through outside mail boxes. However weather becomes a factor in winter, rain, ice etc. I do believe we would be better with an inside house heated service to reduce exposure to the weather conditions.” Bradwell

Another respondent lamented the effects of centralized sorting.

- “Our post office in Unity SK now does not sort local mail. Our local mail is now shipped to Saskatoon to be sorted and then shipped back to Unity. Does this really make sense? If this makes sense, our postal service is really in trouble. (Note: Unity is 194 kilometres from Saskatoon). on the closure of Adanac, in Round Valley RM

Another criticized the way Canada Post interacted with the community:

- “Get real, there will never be a full outlet in Briercrest again. Canada Post decided to close our post office a number of year ago. There was a lot of discussion on retaining services but it fell on deaf ears. I feel that Canada Post has lost a lot of support due to increased rates and decreased service.” Briercrest

One of the most thoughtful overall comments came from the Village of Pleasantdale with 20 kilometres to the nearest Post office.

- “I believe a full service post office is the backbone of a community. Rural communities particularly are slowly dying as local businesses relocate in order to remain competitive. It is certainly more difficult for new small businesses to be successful if they do not have access to a full service postal services.”

This same commentator had a very perceptive view on the effect of the cuts on home-based businesses.

“Even home based businesses that rely on the Internet, E-Bay for example, require cheap accessible shipping of their products. Unfortunately, I also believe that rural Canada will continue to see their services cut or reduced due to relative population sparsity.
The “big ticket” businesses such as agriculture/food production and lumber and mining have product movement mechanisms in place. Finally, I believe having a comprehensive full service post office in rural communities... would benefit those communities and may better co-ordinate services among various departments within the federal and provincial governments which in turn would benefit the Canada Post entity. We cannot afford to lose Canada Post.”
Alberta: “The school closed, the store closed, the church closed” Jean Côté, M.D. Smoky River

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<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>22 (11.6%)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
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Alberta had a low response rate on the survey of 11.6%. Of the 22 respondents, 13 were received from communities where there was no longer a post office and 9 from communities where a franchise continued. Albertan respondents seemed generally more satisfied with the level of service even when the post office had been closed down. While 4 respondents expressed much dissatisfaction with the service (4 or 5 ratings), nine respondents expressed satisfaction with the service (1 or 2) or thought the closure was justified due to the small or zero size of the community where the closure occurred. As one respondent talking about the closure of Jean Côté in Smoky River MD noted: “The school closed, the store closed, the church closed.”

Some respondents even saw the closure of the federally run post office as a positive step. One noted that the closure actually helped the community as the franchise postal outlet now rents space from a local community organization.

Others saw the closure as having little effect.

- “We are the municipal jurisdiction in which the Hamlet of Whitelaw lies. Whitelaw is a small community of approximately 110 residents. The loss of the post office hasn’t affected the community much. In fact the only loss is the ability to mail items and money order services. Whitelaw does not even have a grocery store. So residents must travel to nearby Fairview for services and in Fairview they access any postal services they do not have in Whitelaw.” Whitelaw, in M.D. of Fairview No. 136

But some still had much to say about the service:

- “(we need) Earlier mail delivery; get and mail parcels. Takes too long to send a letter from here to here.” Village of Gadsby
- Another noted privatized delivery resulted in inaccuracy of delivery i.e. mail in wrong boxes and slow delivery.
British Columbia: “Whenever a postal service is closed in a community, a true disservice is imposed upon senior citizens, especially those who are unable to drive.” Elko closure, in RD of East Kootenay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province and territories</th>
<th>Surveys sent</th>
<th>Total surveys received</th>
<th>No postal outlet</th>
<th>Franchise outlet</th>
<th>Avg. kms to PO</th>
<th>Satisfaction in communities within no PO (1 is very satisfied and 5 is very unsatisfied)</th>
<th>Satisfaction in communities with a franchise postal outlet (1 is very satisfied and 5 is very unsatisfied)</th>
<th>Levels of deep dissatisfaction (4 or 5)</th>
<th>Want other services</th>
<th>Number want other services</th>
<th>Effects on small business in closed PO locations (1 is very much and 5 is very little)</th>
<th>Effects on economic stability in closed PO locations (1 is very much and 5 is very little)</th>
<th>Loss of identity in closed PO locations (1 is very much and 5 is very little)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>25 (19.8%)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

British Columbia had a survey response rate of 20%, and just under 50% of the surveys returned came from communities which no longer had a post office. The average distance to drive one way to a post office was 14.2 kilometres. The level of satisfaction for communities without a post office was comparable to other provinces. In other words, it was below the average level of satisfaction so somewhat negative. But what was really noticeable was that the level of loss of identity was 2.5, which signifies a strong feeling of identity loss.

- From the Peace River RD about the closure of North Pine (Pineview), the results were: “Lack of the postal signage showing our postal code. Loss of community identity”.

BC responses were interesting as mentioned in that half came from communities which had a post office which had been closed down completely and one came from a community where the closure had occurred 47 years ago! There were several responses which said closures were inevitable, or that it was not a great hardship to go to the bigger community nearby to do one’s postal business.

On the other hand, there were several communities (4) which ranked the existing postal service as quite unsatisfactory. One of the most insightful comments came from the RD of East Kootenay regarding the Elko closure.
• “Whenever a postal service is closed in a community a true disservice is imposed upon senior citizens, especially those who are unable to drive. Elko has now been closed for over 20 years and is a community which has shown an increase in population. People now have to travel to Fernie or Jaffray to mail a parcel. In rural communities, a post office is a gathering place to socialize with neighbours or catch upon the happenings in the community.”

• One of the most important comments came from the Chief Executive Officer of the Band in Hartley Bay where there is a have a franchise post office but there is poor delivery of mail by airplane. The CEO noted that: “Canada Post only pays the Band Council $6000 per year for the contract. Mail is important. Canada Post wanted to cut off CODs and money orders.“ In a telephone conversation, the CEO also noted that mail delivery was sometimes not met at all when the weekly flight had no room for mail. In isolated communities, where mail is a life line, $6000 a year seems insufficient to run a postal service.

• One respondent complained about the state of Community Mail Boxes in a community which had no post office at all for 13 years. Community Mail Boxes are too easy to break into which puts a strain on police (RCMP) resources.
<table>
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<th>Loss of identity in closed PO locations (1 is very much and 5 is very little)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North West Territories, Yukon and Nunavut</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1 (7.6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only one survey was returned from NWT and thus it is difficult to craft a portrait of closures in these regions.
CONCLUSIONS

Closing down rural post offices, where you then have to drive very far to get basic service, or reducing the quality of the services (which occurs in many cases when a federal post office is closed and then a franchise outlet is funded with very low subsidies, and often hours are also reduced), are contributing to the trend of the closing down or depopulation of large parts of rural Canada. This is not helping small towns and villages attract new residents and new businesses.

In an age of on-line web site shopping and on-line business, not having a post office in your community means:

1) *It is difficult, if not impossible, to start or maintain a business which depends on the mail.*

2) *It further punishes rural residents who order goods by mail (which they are often more likely to do than urban residents).*

3) *It is particularly affects our aging demographic of seniors who are even more important in rural Canada.*

When we began this study in the summer of 2013, we had no idea of the dramatic proposed changes that were to be revealed by Canada Post in December 2013. The closures we have looked at can be seen as part of the now almost fully revealed Canada Post “master plan”, which, when you add up all the proposed moves and the closure of the rural post offices, seems to result in stripping post office services and in cutting good jobs.

What then can be the aim of this policy? In some countries, the end result has been preparing for full-scale privatization of these services. Is this our fate? I hope not and hope that Canadians can be given a chance to decide what kind of postal services they want.
ALTERNATIVES

There are possible policy alternatives!

Firstly, Canadians have governments to deliver the services they need and want. Not every service makes money or breaks even, nor does it or should it have to achieve this goal. It is up to citizens to decide on what services they want government to deliver, and which they are willing to see supported, by fees yes, but also through tax dollars if necessary. The people who saw their post offices closed were never given this choice! The federal government must put any major future decisions before popular and political scrutiny.

Secondly as postal delivery is a public service (still for now at least!) the population must have some input into the current and future policies and how they are developed and implemented.

So here are some alternate ways of dealing with rural postal services:

1. Stop the closing down of any more federally run or franchise post offices.

2. A national panel composed of Canada Post, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, seniors associations, handicapped persons associations, Aboriginal peoples associations, and postal unions, could examine the following issues. The panel would hold public hearings and receive public input:

   (1) Standards as to the design and upkeep of Community Mail Boxes and their conversion where at all possible to indoor Lock Boxes.
   (2) Fees for any administration of a franchise post office outlet that are reasonable to hire staff and run services and which are then linked to inflation
   (3) Minimum hours of operation of a post office.
   (4) Access to other services such as postal banking, government services, prescriptions, etc.
   (5) Costs of maintaining decent and comprehensive postal services in rural Canada.

Recommendations from this panel would be made public and discussed and voted on at the federal level before being implemented by Canada Post.
3. Establish a panel in each province and territory composed of Canada Post, Provincial Municipal Associations, Aboriginal Associations and postal unions to examine where postal services are adequate and where there are major holes in the delivery and services. This would also involve establishing maximum distances for a full service postal location from a community. These panels would hold public hearings and receive public input.

Recommendations from these panels would be made public, discussed and voted at the federal level before being implemented by Canada Post.

4. Mandatory discussion by Canada Post and the municipality concerned on an annual basis at a minimum and when major changes are being considered around such issues as:

- Delivery times and routes;
- Placement of Community Mail Boxes and Lock Boxes;
- Upkeep of all CMBs and LBs; and
- Any other major change to postal services.
APPENDIX 1

Survey on Postal Services

From the 1980s until today, approximately 1,730 post offices have been closed across Canada. We are asking you, as a community leader, to tell us how the post office(s) closures in your community have affected your area. Please complete the survey and return it to us in the self-addressed stamped envelope. Your answers will help ensure Canadians receive the postal services they need.

Name: ___________________________ Title: ___________________________

Community: ___________________________ Email Address: ___________________________

Telephone No.: ___________________________ Fax: ___________________________

Mailing Address: ____________________________________________

Please write the name of the closed post office referenced in the attached letter:

______________________________________________________________________________

Survey Questions

1) Today do you have a post office in the above named community where the post office was noted as closed?  
Yes ☐ No ☐

If you answered, “Yes”, please go to Question #14.

2) How far is the nearest post office from the closed post office we are asking you about?  
Approx. total kms ____

3) Is this post office in a retail store (a franchise outlet) or is it a stand-alone post office (federally owned)?  
In a store ☐ Stand-alone ☐

4) If you are in the community where the post office was closed do people still receive their mail through a lockbox or do you pick it up from a Community Mail Box (CMB)? (lockbox=in a building, CMB=street side, boxes/compartments)  
A lockbox ☐ Community Mail Box ☐
5) Are all postal services available to the community where the post office was closed?
   a. Mail and receive letters  
      Yes ☐ No ☐
   b. Parcels  
      Yes ☐ No ☐
   c. Postal money orders & MoneyGrams  
      Yes ☐ No ☐

6) Are you satisfied with the service you receive today? Circle the value where 1 is very satisfied and 5 is very unsatisfied.
   1 2 3 4 5

7) Did the closure of the post office cause you to use postal services less than before? Circle the value where 1 is much less than before and 5 is much more than before.
   1 2 3 4 5

8) If you had closer access to a full-service post office in the community where the post office was shut down, would you make more use of the mail system?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

9) How has this affected you and your community?
   ________________________________________________________________

10) Did these changes affect small businesses in the community? Circle the value where 1 is very much and 5 is very little.
    1 2 3 4 5

11) Did it affect the economic stability of the community? Circle the value where 1 is very much and 5 is very little.
    1 2 3 4 5

12) Did your community lose part of its identity when it lost the post office? Circle the value where 1 is very much and 5 is very little
    1 2 3 4 5
13) What type of services/products would you like to see provided in your community through a post office?

a) Banking services with a Canadian chartered bank, trust company or credit union  
b) Access to prescription medicine through the mail  
c) Access to provincial services such as drivers & vehicle licenses, health cards, welfare  
d) Access to federal services such as pensions (OAS, CPP,), EI, Tax forms, passports, magazine subscriptions.  
e) Other suggestions for services that would benefit the residents of the community are:  
_________________________________________________________________________  
_________________________________________________________________________  
_________________________________________________________________________  
_________________________________________________________________________  
_________________________________________________________________________  
_________________________________________________________________________  

Thank you! Now go to the comments section at the end. The following sets of questions are for those who answered “Yes” in Question 1. (i.e. Do you still have a post office in your community?)

14) Was your federally operated post office closed and replaced with a Postal Outlet in a retail store or other organization?  
Yes ☐ No ☐  

15) Was your post office reopened as a franchise or in a retail store and did this outlet later close, leaving the community with no postal outlet?  
Yes ☐ No ☐  

16) On what date did this second closure occur?  
________________________  
Not applicable ☐  

17) How far do people in the community now have to travel to pick up your mail and receive postal service?  
Approx. total kms  
_______  

18) Did these changes affect small businesses in the community?  
Circle the value where 1 is very much and 5 is very little.  
1 2 3 4 5
19) Did it affect the economic stability of the community? Circle the value where 1 is very much and 5 is very little.

1 2 3 4 5

20) Are you satisfied with the postal service you receive today? Circle the value where 1 is very satisfied and 5 is very unsatisfied.

1 2 3 4 5

21) What type of services/products would you like to see provided in your community through a post office?

a) Banking services with a Canadian chartered bank, trust company or credit union
b) Access to prescription medicine through the mail
c) Access to provincial services such as drivers & vehicle licenses, health cards, welfare
d) Access to federal services such as pensions (OAS, CPP, EI, Tax forms
e) Magazine/newspaper subscription renewals
f) Other

The End

Thanks for answering! Please feel free to write any additional comments you may have.

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Can we quote your comments in our study?  Yes  No  Contact me first

Please mail this survey in the enclosed stamped self-addressed envelope. Thank you!
APPENDIX 2

Canada Post 5 Point Plan


Canada Post unveils Five-point Action Plan (Dec. 11, 2013)

Plan will return system to financial sustainability by 2019 and ensure continued role of enabling trade and commerce

Ottawa (Ont.) – Today, Canada Post unveiled five initiatives that together will form the foundation of a new postal system designed to serve busy Canadians and meet their changing needs for postal services. It will also open new opportunities to businesses that are redefining how they connect and serve customers in an increasingly digital world. These changes will begin taking effect in the New Year. This comprehensive plan can be achieved without any changes to the Canadian Postal Service Charter. The integrated plan’s five main initiatives are:

1. Community mailboxes

Over the next five years, the one third of Canadian households that receive their mail at their door will be converted to community mailbox delivery. This change will provide significant savings to Canada Post and will have no impact on the two thirds of Canadian households that already receive their mail and parcels through community mailboxes, grouped or lobby mailboxes or rural mailboxes. Community mailboxes have advantages for busy Canadians as they offer individually locked mail and small packet compartments as well as locked compartments for securely receiving parcels. The initial neighbourhoods slated for conversion in the second half of 2014 will be announced once plans are finalized. The transition is expected to take 5 years to complete on a national scale.

2. A new approach to pricing Lettermail to take effect March 31, 2014

Canada Post will introduce a new tiered pricing structure for Lettermail mailed within Canada, which will better reflect the cost of serving various customer segments. Under these changes, the majority of Canadians, because they buy stamps in booklets or coils, will pay $0.85 per stamp, with discounts for customers that use the mail most. The minority of consumers who purchase stamps one at a time, which represents an estimated 2 per cent of stamp purchases, will pay $1 per stamp. The average Canadian household purchases fewer than 2 stamps per month. These stamp price changes will take effect March 31, 2014.1

3. Expanding convenience through postal franchises

Canada Post will strengthen its retail network by opening more franchise postal outlets in stores across Canada. The company will partner with local retail businesses that are conveniently located in the communities they serve and offer added benefits, such as better parking and longer hours.
This will allow busy Canadians to do more shopping in one place. Canada Post will also continue to align its corporate post offices to customer traffic patterns.

4. Streamlining operations

Changes to internal operations will make for a more efficient flow of parcels and mail through the network and to the customers. These changes are driven by technology (such as faster computerized sorting equipment), consolidation (such as processing mail and parcels in a central location) and providing more delivery employees with fuel-efficient vehicles, so the same employee can deliver both mail and parcels. Improved operations will yield cost-effective and more reliable delivery to Canadians, along with better parcel tracking capabilities.

5. Addressing the cost of labour

Canada Post is changing its business model and, as a result, will require fewer employees to serve the future needs of Canadians. With its current labour costs, Canada Post has a much higher cost structure than its competitors in the private sector have. This is simply not sustainable. The company will continue to bring the cost of labour in line with its competitors through attrition and collective bargaining over time. The average age of current employees is 48 and Canada Post expects nearly 15,000 employees to retire or leave the company over the next five years. This is more than enough to allow for the reduction of between 6,000 and 8,000 positions, mainly through attrition. Canada Post will also take the necessary steps to permanently address the sustainability of its pension plan. A leaner workforce will create a more flexible and competitive Canada Post, able to respond quickly to the changing marketplace.

Canada Post has a mandate to fund its operations with revenues from the sale of its products and services, rather than become a burden on taxpayers. With the increasing use of digital communication and the historic decline of Lettermail volumes, Canada Post has begun to post significant financial losses. If left unchecked, continued losses would soon jeopardize its financial self-sufficiency and become a significant burden on taxpayers and customers. In April 2013, a Conference Board of Canada study projected a financial loss of close to $1 billion by 2020 unless Canada Post makes fundamental changes to its business. A projection of that magnitude was directionally consistent with Canada Post’s own projections.

The implementation of this plan means Canada Post can return to financial sustainability by 2019. Once fully implemented, four of the five initiatives are expected to generate financial benefits with an estimated combined worth of $700 million to $900 million per year. Those figures do not include the significant annual savings expected in labour costs and from restructuring the pension, because these are yet to be addressed through future rounds of collective bargaining.
The range in the combined benefits forecasted reflects the need for more detailed planning and the
difficulty of accurately forecasting the pace at which Lettermail volumes will erode. Canada Post has
factored in significant erosion.

The Government of Canada has informed Canada Post of its intent to provide temporary pension relief
from the need to make special payments, including solvency payments estimated at $1 billion in 2014
alone. Along with the new Lettermail pricing, this measure will address the immediate need for
additional liquidity by mid-2014, which was outlined in Canada Post’s most recent financial reports.
During the relief period, Canada Post will act with urgency to restructure the pension plan in order to
ensure its long-term sustainability.

The postal service of the future will reflect and serve Canadians’ new postal needs. As more people
began to communicate and manage their household bills online, Lettermail volumes declined sharply.
Yet as more people shopped online, parcel volumes shot up. This dramatic shift is creating a pressing
need to manage a greater number of parcels and less mail with more valuable items. (These items
include credit and loyalty cards and government-issued cards and licences.) This shift provided clear
direction to Canada Post and the many businesses looking to redefine customer experience in an
increasingly digital world.

With this plan, Canada Post will be in a better position to be the essential enabler of remote trade and
commerce that Canadians and Canadian businesses can count on for years to come.