

Two weeks ago I made known some of my objections to the proposed transfer of the Eureka Post Office distribution facility to Medford, Oregon. I was pleased to hear from my friend and colleague, Retired Eureka Postmaster John Segress, who also voiced his objections to the proposed move. Even though he now lives in another state, John does have empathy for the people of our area as he did serve our community for eleven years. Some of you probably read his article, written from another perspective, published on the editorial page of the Times/Standard on August Second. I have also heard some heartening news about another facility targeted along with Eureka. That would be Reno, Nevada. There were plans to send their mail processing to West Sacramento. Imagine the problems trying to get over the Sierras during the winter months. That bad idea was exchanged for another bad idea, sending Reno's mail to Las Vegas, an eight hour plus truck trip one way. Management either gave up or someone in a high place blocked both ideas and Reno will retain its present operation, saving about Two Hundred and Seventy jobs, at least for the time being. The North Bay Facility located in Petaluma is another one being considered for closure. They would lose Two Hundred Sixty jobs with the mail being sent to Oakland, an office hard pressed to handle their own mail. A labor agreement between the Postal Service and the Postal Clerks' Union allows for excess employee reassignment within a fifty mile radius. The distance between Petaluma and Oakland facilities is Fifty One miles. I wonder how and at what cost the reassignment will be handled. A number of years ago, when the Salinas distribution center was sent to San Jose, a distance of Sixty One miles, the union balked and the Postal Service was forced to transport, some Twenty odd employees from Salinas to San Jose and return each day. I wonder how long that situation continued before it was resolved? No one talks about it. Back to the Eureka plan, the proposed employee excess is a bit cloudy with the Postal Service giving out one number and the Union giving out a different estimate. Neither gives an estimate of how many full and part time jobs might be affected. An added expense would be the transportation of the mail from Eureka to Medford. Presently there is highway contract service from Eureka to Crescent City and from Grants Pass to Crescent City but the daylight hours don't coincide with what would be needed to transport mail directly to Medford for distribution and return so a new additional highway contract will have to be initiated. That is NOT a minor expense. I understand that Congressman Jared Huffman has scheduled a Town Hall meeting on the subject for August Twenty ~~First~~ ^{Second} from four to five thirty P.M. at the Wharfinger Building. Please make every effort to attend and tell your friends.

Fred Nelson for Community Comment