

Concerned Citizens:

We write this letter asking the citizens of Wilkes-Barre and surrounding communities to pay special attention to the United States Postal Services' recent announcement of a feasibility study they are conducting to consider moving mail processing operations from the Wilkes-Barre Processing & Distribution Facility to the Scranton P&DF.

We feel this move, if they follow through, would be detrimental to the mail service citizens and businesses in the valley receive from the Postal Service. Delivery standards will not be the same if processed in Scranton. Will they tell you the truth that mail processed in Scranton and sent to Harrisburg and Reading will now arrive one day later? Will they tell you mail received from Harrisburg will arrive one day later? How will they make up for the extra travel time if mail is trucked to Scranton? Will they move up collection times? Will it result in later delivery times, which is very possible? Can they guarantee the traffic congestion on Interstate 81 between Wilkes-Barre and Scranton (which is one of the worst in the state) will not hamper mail truck arrival times? Are they considering bad weather and breakdowns? If the mail continues to be processed in Wilkes-Barre you do not have these transportation worries. How about Anthrax or any other threat from terrorism? If this threat becomes real when only one plant is up and running it could cripple delivery of mail in our communities for several months. With both plants processing mail, the other plant can continue operating.

The USPS is also a big employer to veterans returning from service. Veterans make up around 30% of the workforce in the Wilkes-Barre Post Office. Some of these veterans suffer from service related medical conditions. If forced to travel longer distances for employment they would have no choice but to resign if they can't make longer trips. Also, without jobs to return to in the valley, where will our veterans find gainful employment when returning from service?

Nobody else will give the excellent service to Social Security, Sallie Mae, and Blue Cross mail that the employees of the Wilkes-Barre facility do now. Social Security mail is finalized by hand in Wilkes-Barre. Thousands of pieces of mail without enough postage are pulled from the mail stream, saving the USPS money. Also, certified and delivery confirmation mail is culled out and scanned as received, giving customers the service they pay for. Wilkes-Barre employees do a fantastic job preparing mail for delivery and take great pride keeping up with service standards all citizens and businesses in Wilkes-Barre and surrounding communities deserve.

Throughout the years the Wilkes-Barre Post Office has been the recipient of numerous awards for being ranked the Performance Leader and has been # 1 in the Harrisburg cluster for Overnight Delivery and various other awards. These awards are the result of management and employees working together to achieve these results. The Wilkes-Barre facility is operating efficiently. Why penalize a community for having such a strong work ethic?

Also lost if mail is processed in Scranton is our **Wilkes-Barre PA** Postmark. This is equivalent to taking Wilkes-Barre City off the map. We would simply lose our identity.

Because of declining mail volume the USPS is looking for ways to cut costs. Why cut costs at our expense? This may negatively impact your city or neighborhood. You deserve to get your mail on time and we would like nothing more than to continue to serve you on time.

You probably have experienced longer wait times in line at the Post Office. This is another cost-cutting idea by the USPS to save money by reducing window clerks. Again, another move we, the employees, do not agree with.

You may ask what happens to the 230 employees of the Wilkes-Barre Post Office if all the mail is processed in Scranton? Most, if not all, will still have jobs. Some in Scranton, most to further outlying Post Offices. Some may be able to travel to and from their place of employment. Most will have to move out of the valley. Where would the savings be? This would be a negative economic impact to Wilkes-Barre and surrounding communities and businesses which cannot afford to lose more

jobs and employees who live and invest in the community. We all have ties to this valley. Our families are here, we love the people here, and would love to retire here. Which brings us to what you can do to thwart any chance of reduced mail service.

First, make your voice heard by writing to your Congressmen and all elected Town, City, County, & State Officials and Civic Leaders in Wilkes-Barre and surrounding communities. Attend Council Meetings, voice your concerns, and ask that resolutions be adopted to save the Wilkes-Barre Post Office from consolidations of our mail.

Also, we have created a website ([www.savethewbpo.org](http://www.savethewbpo.org)) where you can go to keep abreast of the latest news on this issue including when and where we will conduct informational picketing. You will be able to download and print form letters to the USPS and all political leaders expressing your concerns. We ask that you send your comments/concerns to Marita Hines- USPS Consumer Affairs Manager, USPS Central PA. District, 1425 Crooked Hill RD Harrisburg PA 17107, whom the USPS has directed all comments to. Addresses to political leaders will be available on this website.

You will be able to download and print a petition from this website to take to your family, friends, and businesses or you can simply sign the on-line petition by typing in your name and valid email address.

The Postal Service must be accountable and transparent to all postal customers while being sensitive to the needs of the communities it serves.

The USPS has already started the feasibility study and has proposed to involve the community's input, after the study. The public has a right to give their input much earlier in the process. Don't wait to be asked for it. State your concerns now. Attempted consolidations of post offices have been going on around the country for years now and those communities who have fought the hardest have had the best chance of being successful.

We feel that the "Valley with a Heart" is also the "Valley with Pride" and this pride that is instilled in you will help Wilkes-Barre City and surrounding communities successfully defeat any attempt by the USPS to reduce service and strip Wilkes-Barre City of its identity.

We cannot fight this alone. That is why we, the dedicated employees of the Wilkes-Barre Post Office, respectfully ask for your help and look forward to working with you so Wilkes-Barre and its surrounding communities continue to prosper.

Thank you for your support and God Bless.

John Kishel, President  
Wilkes-Barre Area Local 175 APWU

Bill Smith, President  
NPMHU Local 308 Wilkes-Barre Branch