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Emerson: Closures Threaten Rural Towns

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A SMT News Report

WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. Jo Ann Emerson (MO-08) said today that the financial situation facing the U.S. Postal Service should force many changes in the way the semi-public entity does business, but should not include service reductions that hurt rural communities.

The Postal Service announced on Tuesday that it was “reviewing” a list of more than 3,700 post offices for possible closure, including a number in Southeast Missouri. Included on the list released Tuesday post offices in Greystone and Brownwood in Stoddard County, as well as the Southeast Missouri communities of Blodgett, Bragg City, Braggadodico, Canalou, Catron, Dutchtown, Gobbler, Tallapoosa, Vanduser and Whitewater.

“Clearly the Postal Service needs to fix its business model, but reducing mail delivery from six days a week to five, or even three, is not going to win them the customers and businesses they need to turn things around. Neither will the closures of a thousand post offices around the country. The combination of these two strategies mean that Americans in rural communities, especially senior citizens and disabled individuals, will have to travel great distances to get to their mail,” Emerson said.

Emerson noted that, under a scheme to eliminate Saturday delivery of the U.S. Mail, nine

federal holidays would have caused three-day interruptions in mail service.

“Bills, checks, medicines and cards from loved ones are some of the most important materials to travel regularly through our postal system. I hate to think about the ramifications of a cut-back on postal service on Americans all over the country, but especially in rural areas, where we represent less than one percent of the cost of doing postal business,” Emerson said.

As Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, Emerson included language in her legislation which would both prohibit six day delivery and the closure of rural post offices.

“We rely on our post offices in a way different from people in suburban and urban areas. For instance, our newspapers in rural areas are often delivered by post. I remain extremely opposed to changes and closures that save the post office from being forced to reorganize the things which will truly save money in the longterm.”

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