

RONDA CARRINGTON, MANAGER
CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND CLAIMS

*UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE*

August 18, 2004

Mr. Ron Piceno
Office of Congressman Ed Pastor
411 N Central Ave., Ste 150
Phoenix AZ 85004-2120

Dear Mr. Piceno:

This is in response to a letter sent to Congressman Pastor from Ms. Kay Hatch, President of the Board of Directors for Pointe South Mountain Residential Association. Ms. Hatch asked your office to intercede in an impasse with the Postal Service regarding delivery to the current neighborhood box units (NBUs) throughout the community.

I am disheartened to learn that the Board feels the Postal Service has mandated their NBUs be replaced and configured differently in the various neighborhoods. I have enclosed a letter from Ms. Diane Carideo-Oper, Manager of Customer Services for the Phoenix Ahwatukee Post Office. Ms. Carideo-Oper wrote this letter on April 26th, extending an offer to replace many of the old NBUs with brand new high-security cluster box units (HSCBUs). This offer was made in an effort to replace the broken or declining physical condition of boxes currently in place. The current boxes are no longer manufactured and there are no replacement parts for repair. The boxes are the property of the HOA and maintenance and repair is their responsibility. The Postal Service is unable to repair them.

Ms. Carideo-Oper attended a special board meeting June 8, 2004 to discuss the available options. She left that meeting confident in the fact that the board had accepted the offer of the Postal Service to replace the boxes at no charge to the residents. Ms. Carideo-Oper has worked diligently with the Property Managers to resolve the issues which would prevent the installation of the new boxes. Diane worked with the Property Manager to locate the boxes along a logical line of travel for the residents as well.

Several boxes in the community are in relatively poor condition. Often the problem has been exacerbated by the heavy weight of the stucco on top of the box. This has caused the roof to cave inward and the carrier has a difficult time opening and securing the closure of the box.

The Postal Service made an extremely generous offer to furnish high security CBUs at no charge to the customers. The Postal Service was also going to incur the cost of installing concrete pads and the installation of the boxes. Consolidating some of the stops would greatly help the Postal Service to absorb some of these expenses. There would not be a reduction of carriers delivering to the community, but would reduce the time spent at each current stop. A simplified carrier route would also help us reduce some of the safety issues that are apparent in the cul-de-sacs.

Regrettably, Carl Grigel, Phoenix Postmaster, has withdrawn his liberal offer of the high-security CBUs. These will be offered to a neighboring community. I apologize that the HOA Board did not feel we were willing to work with them toward a winning solution. These HSCBUs cost approximately \$2000 each and they are not presently available for retail sale. It is estimated that this project would cost the Postal Service approximately \$95,000 and cost the Pointe South Mountain customer nothing.

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I have enclosed a response to the "Call for Action" memo posted on all the NBUs. In addition, Mr. Grigel will send a letter to every resident explaining the Postal Service's position and the proposed offer that the HOA board declined. Again, let me emphasize this offer was never a mandate, but a golden opportunity to replace dilapidated, damaged mailboxes. These new boxes have virtually stopped all forms of mail theft and provide the customer with a receptacle for outgoing mail and incoming small parcels. Once these boxes are installed in a community, mail thieves are forced to relocate to a neighborhood that does not yet have them. It is discouraging that the Pointe South Mountain residents will not be able to take advantage of an opportunity to negate mail theft and secure their incoming and outgoing mail.

Sincerely,

Ronda Carrington, Manager
Consumer Affairs and Claims

cc: Carl Grigel, Postmaster

Enclosure

USPS RESPONSE TO RESIDENT NOTICE

POINTE SOUTH MOUNTAIN CALL TO ACTION

1. **New high security mandated by Inspector General to prevent mail fraud and identity theft.** The new high security cluster box units (HSCBUs) were not mandated by the Postal Service or the Inspector General. They were offered as a solution for the dilapidated, broken neighborhood box units (NBUs) currently in use.
2. **Current boxes are unsafe for mail carriers, i.e., spiders, scorpions, rusty hinges, stucco falling apart, parts no longer available, traffic hazards, etc.** Many of the present boxes or locations present a safety concern. In addition, some of the boxes are collapsing due to the weight of the stucco structures bearing down on the locking mechanism.
3. **The Postal Service could condemn all 51 boxes and require all residents to pick up mail at the Ahwatukee Post Office, 51st and Elliott Road.** Postal Service management did not indicate that all boxes would be condemned and customers would be required to collect their mail at the Post Office.
4. **Currently, residents on Winston have to go to the Post Office to pick up mail due to box vandalism and repair is on hold until this replacement program is approved.** Residents on Winston are currently picking up their mail at the Ahwatukee station due to a broken NBU. Repair is not on hold. This box cannot be repaired because parts are no longer available. Replacement is the responsibility of the HOA.
5. **Labor savings to Post Office is reducing 4 routes into 1 route.** The number of routes for this community will not change.
6. **The Postal Service does not need our permission for abandonment of existing boxes and installing new mega centers on utility easements within the community; they were just being nice getting our input. Indeed, we have improved the original proposal which was only five mail centers and is now fourteen.** Manager, Customer Services, Diane Carideo-Oper, worked with the property manager and attended a board meeting to explain the proposal. She met the property manager at the delivery area and showed her the proposed locations and changed locations upon recommendation from the property manager. Diane met again with the property manager and a board member of the HOA to answer questions and clarify issues. The number of stops has never varied from the original proposal of thirteen.
7. **We cannot fix the old boxes or buy new ones at our cost to replace; they must have route reduction. If we were to replace all existing boxes, it would be in excess of \$100,000.** The old boxes cannot be repaired when they break because they're obsolete and parts are no longer available. Route reduction has not been an issue with the Postal Service.

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