



For now.

Canada Post is reviewing its national network and has announced plans to close a mail processing plant in Quebec City as the very first step in its review. This fact sheet will explain what is happening to postal service and jobs in Quebec City and at post offices from coast to coast.

Quebec City

On August 3, 2005, Canada Post announced its intention to close the mail processing plant in Quebec City and transfer mail processing to Montreal.

Jobs

Closing the Quebec City plant will eliminate 302 CUPW jobs. Canada Post says that no regular employee will lose his or her job. But Quebec City will permanently lose 302 jobs and dozens of temporary workers will be thrown out of work. Regular and part-time workers will be re-assigned to jobs in other classifications. There will be fewer opportunities for part-time workers who wish to go full-time. Day shift positions will be eliminated. More workers will be forced to work nights. They will have to wait for mail to come back from Montreal.

Service

The corporation claims that transferring the mail to Montreal will allow it to improve service for mail destined

for Montreal *and* meet delivery standards in Quebec City.

It makes no sense to put Quebec City mail on trucks, drive it to the west end of Montreal, process it, and then put it back on trucks to drive it back to Quebec City.

Canada Post's claims about improving service don't make much sense either. The corporation says about 70 per cent of mail already goes to Montreal after first being sorted in Quebec City. It says that sending it to Montreal will improve service. But a large portion of the mail destined for Montreal has always been shipped there directly and has never been sorted in Quebec City. Transferring this mail to Montreal does not change the handling procedure for this mail and will not improve service for this mail.

Sending the mail to Montreal and closing the plant in Quebec City doesn't really have anything to do with improving service. The corporation simply hopes to improve its bottom line by selling the plant in Quebec City and cutting jobs.

Challenges at Canada Post

Canada Post suggests that it decided to close the plant in Quebec City to help the corporation face challenges such as decreasing volumes, increasing points of call and the increased costs associated with salaries, pensions and benefits.

Canada Post has been talking about declining volumes for decades. But volumes have not yet decreased. In fact, last year volumes increased. Points of call *have* increased. They have increased every year since there was a post office. Our

salaries, pensions and benefits are comparable with unionized workers doing similar work.

The real challenge we face is that Canada Post thinks of itself as a business, not a Crown corporation. Crown corporations fulfil public policy objectives of government. They do not operate like corporations with strictly commercial objectives. They are supposed to be managed in the best interests of the public. Their performance is supposed to be assessed based on the social and economic benefits they provide, not just the money they make.

What next?

Canada Post has informed CUPW that it is reviewing the national network, including mechanized mail processing plants. The Quebec City plant was just the first facility to be reviewed - and closed. Other closures may follow.

The corporation says its national network review does not include rural post offices. But it systematically reviews rural offices every time a postmaster dies or retires, or a fire occurs, or a lease is up.

Closures to date

Canada Post has already permanently or temporarily closed almost 50 rural post offices since 2001, in spite of a moratorium on closures in rural and small towns.

To deal with the public outcry over these closures, John McCallum, the minister responsible for Canada Post, recently made a statement claiming that the federal government's commitment to the moratorium on rural post office closures "remains unwavering." But Minister McCallum also admitted that some closures may be unavoidable.

Need for democratic process

Minister McCallum's recent statement said Canada Post will contact his office about any rural closure and that his staff will then inform the member of Parliament in the area.

There is a vague assurance that Canada Post will work with "local officials" to see if a post office can be reopened. Not the public. Not municipalities. Not postal unions. Not major stakeholders. Just local officials.

This is a far cry from the government's original commitment. When the Liberal government announced the moratorium, it promised not to make any changes to this policy without first undergoing "a full and comprehensive consultation with Postal Service Customer Councils." The government said, "The people will decide."

Postal Services Customer Councils no longer exist. There is no clear process for "full and comprehensive consultation." The people are not deciding on what happens to their post office.

Our public post office needs a uniform and democratic process for making changes to its network of offices, outlets and plants. The public and postal workers need to be part of this process in both rural and urban areas.

CUPW wants the federal government to instruct Canada Post:

1. to stop the closure of the mail processing plant in Quebec City and proposed closures in other locations.
2. to consult with the public, postal unions and other major stakeholders to develop a uniform and democratic process for making changes to Canada Post's network.
3. to maintain, expand and improve our public postal network.