

Town's historic post office for sale after mail merger

By Sherry McNeil
Peninsula News Review

Residents accustomed to sending mail from Sidney's heritage post office building on Beacon Avenue may soon be buying stamps and collecting parcels at a different location in town.

As of today, April 21, Canada Post is consolidating the postal operations of Sidney, Brentwood Bay and Saanichton in a new facility at 2065 Mills Road.

Mail processing and letter carrier services of the main Sidney office will be relocated to Mills Road, leaving only a need

for retail counter space in downtown Sidney.

"The corporation will try to sell this property and secure new accommodations in the downtown core for the retail counter," Ida Irwin, the manager of communications for Canada Post said in a March 29 letter to Central Saanich Mayor Arlene Box.

But the post office, designated a heritage building in 1992 at the government's request, may not be so easy to sell, noted Richard Wey, the head of Sidney's heritage advisory committee.

Because the post office is a heritage building, it comes with

restrictions, including the said.

"The corporation will try to sell this property and secure new accommodations in the downtown core for the retail counter."

— *Ida Irwin*

requirement that any additions to the building be in the heritage character.

"Whoever purchases it will have to keep that in mind," Wey

The post office was built in 1936 by Knott and Jones of Victoria for a mere \$18,000, and has since become an important Sidney landmark.

The consolidation will also affect the location of retail counters in Central Saanich. "The corporation is committed to securing new retail space in a convenient location in the downtown core of Brentwood Bay and Saanichton," Irwin wrote.

Canada Post is currently looking for buyers of its rural route dispatch properties at 7835 East Saanich Road and 7176 West Saanich Road.

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The consolidation is to provide cost savings, better docking facilities and vehicle movement and more efficient mail processing, said Irwin in an interview. The merger of the services is part of a nation-wide program, she added.

Other than plans to relocate the retail service counters in each community, Irwin said the changes will not affect customers, and there will be no impact on postal box holders.

No date has been set for the change in retail counters, as it depends on the sale of the current buildings.



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