

Letter: PO boxes seem to subsidize home delivery

To the community,

Like many of you, I recently received my bill for my post office box this month. I was surprised at the amount, \$34 for six months or \$68 for 12 months. But why?

Let's think about this for a minute. I have the option to get my mail delivered to my home. For this I pay nothing, in fact the person sending the mail has covered the cost. The Postal Service has to pay an employee to sort the mail in the post office, load the mail into a vehicle and drive to my neighborhood to deliver a letter or package to my door or curbside. Either the post office or the contract employee has to cover the cost to purchase the vehicle and then maintain it and have proper insurance. All of this, along with the many, many other costs associated with getting a letter or package from one place to another is paid for with a 47 cents stamp. Again, I pay nothing for home delivery.

The second option is to "rent" a post office box at the post office. The postal employee sorts the mail in the post office, loads the mail into some kind of cart and proceeds to deliver the mail to the individual mailboxes, all without ever leaving the building. There is no cost of a vehicle or its associated costs. Therefore, it is much less expensive to deliver mail to a box in the post office building than to any address outside the same building. So why are we forced to pay extra for the less expensive option?

The Postal Service was granted a temporary rate increase of 3 cents in 2014 to 49 cents and that was taken back by 2 cents in 2016 to the current 47 cents for a stamp for a 1 ounce first class letter. These rate fluctuations along with the

requirement that the Postal Service pre-fund all future pension obligations have lead to massive operating losses, in the billions of dollars, at the post office.

Could it be that the Postal Service is jacking up the fees for a post office box to help make up some of its operating losses? In essence, the lower cost post office box users are being forced to subsidize the higher cost home delivery user.

Perhaps now is the right time to look at the proposal put forth by Bernie Sanders, and others, to allow the Postal Service to offer limited banking and financial services. This is a very common practice in Europe.

Thank you,

Jonathan Moore, South Lake Tahoe