

Postmaster indicates rate may increase again

By Sue Jepsen

The recent postal rate increase will be enough for now, but more than likely there will be another rate increase proposal next year, according to Lincoln postal officials.

Postal rates on first-class mail increased from 15 cents to 18 cents on letters and from 10 cents to 12 cents on postcards as of March 22.

U.S. Postmaster General William Bolger doesn't appear to be considering a service decrease, Lincoln Postmaster Jerome Wieser said.

"I guess we (the postal service) didn't think the way to cope with the reduction of appropriations is to cut service," Wieser said, adding that a cut in service such as

eliminating Saturday mail service, is a possibility in the future.

Since the postal reorganization of 1971, the Postal Service is required to be financially self-sufficient.

Wieser said rising costs because of general inflation necessitated the rate increase.

"We have to raise enough money to take care of our operations," he said.

Requested 20 cents

Originally the Postal Service requested a rate increase to 20 cents, but that was denied by the Postal Rate Commission, a group that oversees postage rate and wage increases.

"There was a question of what the Rate Commission would allow," Wieser said, and, therefore, the service printed the "B" stamp that carried no monetary markings.

The same design appeared in 1978. The "A" stamp was orange on a white background. Wieser said he suspects the Postal Service will continue using that system if it is ever unsure of what a new stamp rate will be.

Since the increase, Wieser said a "couple million" stamps have been sold and he received 2 1/2 million more March 27.

Wieser said that if a letter is mailed without the required 18 cents postage, the balance will be collected on delivery, unless the sender mails a large number of letters. In that case they will be returned for the needed postage, he said.

To help keep costs down and keep rate increases farther apart, the Postal Service is pushing for nine-digit zip codes.

The nine digit will consist of the original five numbers in the present zip codes plus four add-ons, Wieser said. Switching to the new longer zip codes is part of a plan to switch to mechanized mail sorting, he said.

A machine will read the zip codes and route the letters directly to carrier routes. Presently, the letters are machine-sorted to zip code zones then hand-sorted to carrier routes, Wieser said.

The Postal Service estimates the new zip codes will allow a 48 percent return on the investment of the sorting machines.

Help contain costs

"This is not to speed up mail, but rather to help us to contain our costs," Wieser said.

The Postal Service would like to have the four-digit add-on in use five years from now, Wieser said. However, at this time, some members of Congress are opposed to the new zip codes, he said.

Wieser said that 85 percent of all mailers are "big mailers." In Lincoln, for example, someone who mails 1,000 pieces of mail per day is a large mailer.

If those mailers used the longer zip codes that alone would save the Postal Service money. As an incentive to convert to the new zip codes the Postal Service is offering a discount of 1/2 cent per letter for large mailers.

Even without the longer zip code, Wieser said the Postal Service is doing a good job. He said that the last 10 years the volume of mail per year has increased from 80 billion to 106 billion, and productivity has increased 34 percent in the same 10 years.

"We still provide an affordable service, if it were unaffordable they wouldn't use it," he said.

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Public library to host sale of used books

The Lincoln Public Library will have its 10th annual used book sale April 9 through 11. The preview sale is scheduled for Thursday, April 9, from 4 to 8:30 p.m. Although the preview is open to the public, it is primarily for buyers and collectors. A \$10 admission fee will be charged.

The regular sale will take place on Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., there is no admission charge.

Adult books and paperbacks are priced at 50 cents, and children's books at 25 cents. Other miscellaneous items including phonograph albums also will be on sale.

The sale is sponsored by the Lincoln City Library Foundation, a non-profit organization. Money raised at the sale this year will go to the record library, because not enough money was appropriated.

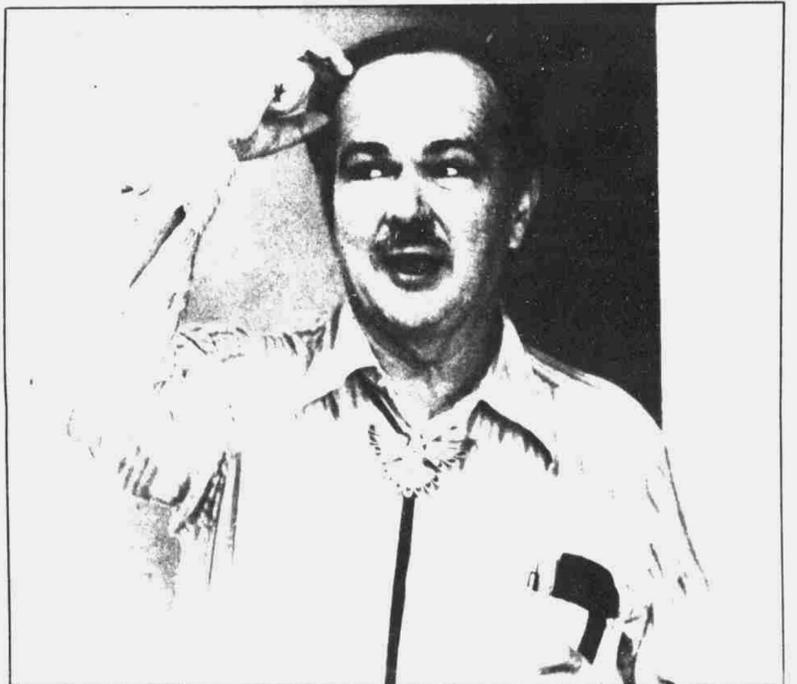


Photo by Kent Morgan Olson

Eugene M. Shoemaker delivers a lecture entitled "Recent Results of the Voyager Mission to Jupiter and Saturn" in conjunction with the Barbour-Schramm Lecture series.

Voyager flight results explained by lecturer

By Patty Pryor

The flight of the Voyager spacecraft that passed Saturn and Jupiter was a unique mission, a U.S. Geological Survey representative said Wednesday night in Morrill Hall Auditorium.

Eugene M. Shoemaker, who spoke on the scientific results of the mission, was at UNL as part of the Barbour-Schramm Lectures, sponsored by alumni of the UNL Geology Department.

"We will never have another mission quite like this (Voyager mission)," he said.

"The reason we could send spacecraft so far," he explained, "was because of the gravitational force of the planets."

Each time the spacecraft neared a planet, he said, the gravitational field of the planet pulled the spacecraft nearer to the planet, and then pushed it further on its way.

Shoemaker brought with him numerous slides from the mission's three encounters with Jupiter and Saturn. Voyager I, before completing the mission, took pictures of both planets. Voyager II has only visited Jupiter so far.

Voyager II was actually launched first,

he said, but it was sent on a longer orbit, so it will take more time to complete its mission.

The slides of Jupiter gave a close-up view of the Great Red Spot on Jupiter, which is larger than the diameter of the Earth, Shoemaker said.

Extreme close-ups of Jupiter's four closest moons were also shown in the Voyager slides.

All four moons can be seen at this time of year with a good pair of field glasses, he said.

The slides of Saturn revealed extremely complicated bands of gases on the surface, which Shoemaker said have not yet been fully explained.

Saturn is not nearly as massive or as colorful as Jupiter, he added.

"The ring system of Saturn is classically divided into three bands," he explained, "called the A ring, the B ring and C ring," which are all visible through a long focal length telescope.

"The ring system is enormously more complicated than any intimation had ever allowed," he added.

Voyager II will reach Saturn on August 25, 1981, then will reach Uranus in 1986 and Neptune in 1989.

"So the excitement isn't over yet," Shoemaker said.

exposures!

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