Town of Barrington Highway Department
4424 Bath Road
Penn Yan, New York 14527

Steven E. Wheeler, Superintendent
Telephone: 607-243-8323

Date: February 17, 2004

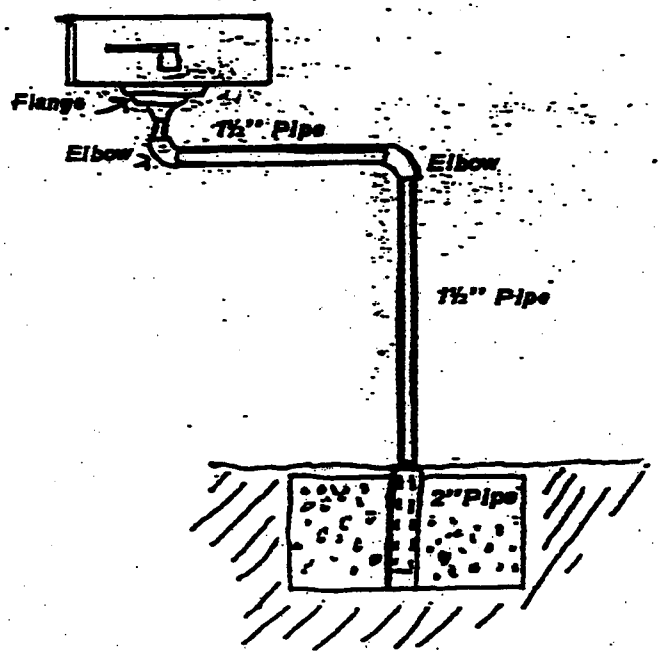
Re: Mailbox Installation

Each winter, the accidental destruction of mailboxes along Town of Barrington roads has becomes an issue. Residents use a variety of materials and methods to construct supports for their mailboxes. In the course of plowing the roads, it is necessary to plow off the shoulders to provide room for future deposits of snow. This is done with a hydraulically operated wing, controlled by the second man in the plow truck (wingman). A number of things can happen that may result in a damaged or destroyed mailbox. Some boxes and posts are knocked over by the force of the snow flying off the wing of the plow, not by the wing actually striking the structure.

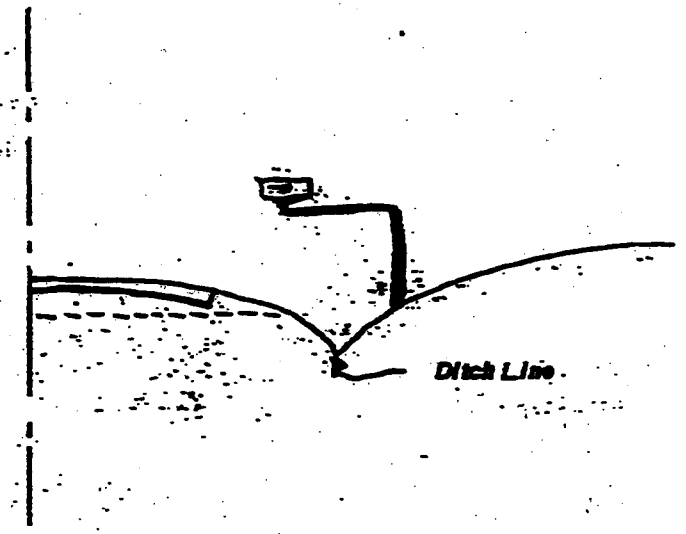
The Town of Barrington proposes that all mailboxes be constructed according to specifications that will allow boxes to swing away and not be damaged by the plow truck. In addition, this design will better allow for summer shoulder reconstruction projects to proceed efficiently.

By resolution of the Town of Barrington Town Board, those mailboxes damaged during winter plowing that have been constructed according to these specifications (or an equivalent method that has been approved by the Highway Superintendent), will be repaired by the highway department, while all others will be the responsibility of the homeowner. Further, The Town of Barrington will only replace damaged mailboxes with a generic mailbox. Copies of the specifications for mailbox installation are available to anyone requesting such. These may be obtained by either calling the Town of Barrington Highway Department at 607-243-8323 or stopping at the Barrington Town Hall during open hours. This policy will take effect on to allow the homeowner sufficient time to comply with this installation method.

a serviceable rural
MAIL BOX MOUNTING



METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION



METHOD OF LOCATION

The details given here are for construction with standard pipe and fittings.

The first step is to size up the location for your mailbox to decide exactly where it should be and how much pipe will be needed. Don't forget to consult your highway superintendent or rural mail carrier.

The best size pipe to use is 1½ inch. This will fit snugly into the 2 inch base pipe. After deciding the length of pipe for the horizontal arm and distance the box should be above the ground at the base, add about a foot to allow seating into the larger base pipe. You will also need a 4 to 6 inch piece of 1½ inch pipe to form the flange to the elbow.

The 2 inch base pipe should be about 15 inches long. Besides the pipe, you will need two elbows and one flange to fit the 1½ inch pipe.

You will also need some cement, sand and gravel to pour the foundation for your mailbox mounting. By using 1½ inch pipe inside the 2 inch base pipe, your mailbox mounting will pivot about the vertical axis if it is accidentally struck, thereby preventing breakage. However, to keep the mailbox from being moved around in the wind, it should not swing too freely. A good way to do this is to groove the 2 inch base pipe and put a bolt through the 1½ inch pipe so that it rests firmly in place.

632.52 Installation and Use

632.521 Custom-Built Curbside Mailboxes

Postmasters are authorized to approve curbside mailboxes constructed by individuals who, for aesthetic or other reasons, do not want to use an approved manufactured box. The custom-built box must conform generally to the same requirements as approved manufactured boxes relative to the flag, size, strength, and quality of construction.

632.522 Painting and Identification

The USPS prefers that curbside mailboxes and posts or supports be painted white, although other colors may be used. Where box numbers are used, the numbers must be inscribed in contrasting color in neat letters and numerals not less than 1 inch high on the side of the box visible to the carrier's regular approach, or on the door if boxes are grouped. Where street names and house numbers are assigned by local authorities and the postmaster has authorized use of a street name and house number as a postal address, the house number must be shown on the box. If the box is on a different street from the customer's residence, the street name and house number must be inscribed on the box. Placement of the owner's name on the box is optional. Advertising on boxes or supports is prohibited.

632.523 Posts and Supports

Posts or other supports for curbside mailboxes must be neat and of adequate strength and size. They may not be designed to represent effigies or caricatures that tend to disparage or ridicule any person. The box may be attached to a fixed or movable arm.

632.524 Location

Curbside mailboxes must be placed so that they may be safely and conveniently served by carriers without leaving their conveyances. They must be reasonably and safely accessed by customers. Boxes must also be on the right-hand side of the road and in the carrier's direction of travel in all cases where driving on the left-hand side of the road to reach the boxes would pose a traffic hazard or violate traffic laws and regulations. On new rural or highway contract routes, all boxes must be on the right side of the road in the carrier's direction of travel. Boxes must be placed to conform to state laws and highway regulations. Carriers are subject to the same traffic laws and regulations as are other motorists. Customers must remove obstructions, including vehicles, trash cans, and snow, that make delivery difficult.

Generally, customers should install boxes with the bottom of the box at a vertical height between and from the road surface. Because of varying road and curb conditions and other factors, the USPS recommends that customers contact the postmaster or carrier before erecting or replacing their mailboxes and supports.

632.525 Grouping

Boxes should be grouped wherever possible, especially at or near crossroads, service turnouts, or other places where a considerable number of boxes are presently located.

New mailbox installation and design promoted by county

Effective Nov. 1, 1998 Yates County will only replace or repair mailboxes of a specific design.

PENNYAN—Each winter, the accidental destruction of mailboxes along Yates County highways becomes an issue, so Highway Superintendent Gordon Mills suggests a swing-away mailbox design to help prevent unnecessary damage.

A number of things result in a damaged or destroyed mailbox when making room along the shoulders for more snow deposits, notes Mills. Some boxes and posts are knocked over by the force of the snow flying off the wing of the plow, rather than the wing actually striking the structure.

The Public Works Committee of the Yates County Legislature proposes construction allowing boxes to swing away, preventing damage. The proposed design will also make summer shoulder reconstruction projects easier.

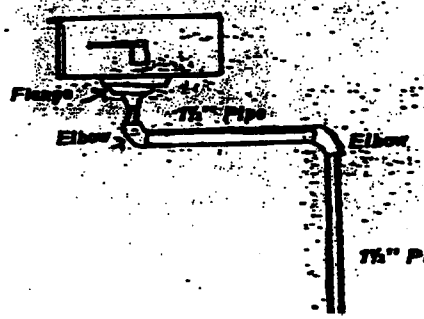
Mailboxes constructed according to these specifications (or an equivalent method approved by the highway superintendent), but are still damaged during winter plowing, will be repaired by the highway department.

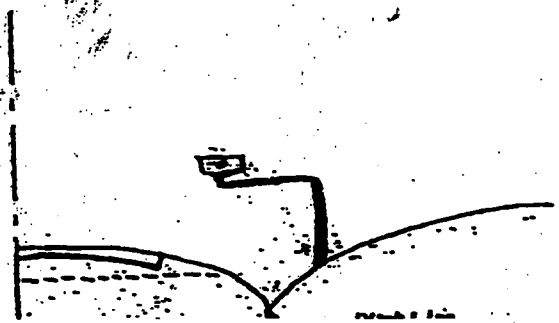
All others will be the responsibility of the homeowner, according to a resolution of the Public Works Committee.

Yates County will only replace damaged mailboxes with a generic mailbox. Copies of the specifications for mailbox installation are available by calling the Yates County Highway Department at (315)536-2336, or stopping at the office between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m.

This policy takes effect Nov. 1, 1998 to allow homeowners time to comply with the method.

Proposed mailbox design and installation





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INFORMAL OPINION, ATTORNEY GENERAL 2/28/66 - Mailbox's

There is no statutory or legal authority which grants a property owner or resident along a public highway any right to place a mailbox in a highway right of way. The owner may have an informal license, but this does not endow the owner of the mailbox with any legal rights in the highway when needed for highway purposes.

The Highway Superintendent and the State have a duty to keep the highway available for public use. Snow removal and snow storage are an incident of that use.

"The highways of the state are made for and devoted to public travel, and the whole public have the right to their use in their entirety and when osbstructions to public travel are found within their bounds, the commissioners of highways are clothed with power to remove them without waiting for the slow process of law, even though travel be not absolutely and entirely prevented." (Emphasis supplied). VAN WYCK v LENT, 33 Hun 301.

When necessity of keeping the highway open conflicts with the individual's receipt of the mail, the latter must stand aside. The owner might even be compelled to remove the box under HIGHWAY LAW §319.

The owner has no right to interfere with the speedy and efficient removal of snow by placing the mailbox in such a position as to cause this result, and no liability results on the part of the public official charged with the duty of snow removal if such a box is so placed that it may be injured by proper highway maintenance.

See HIGHWAY LAW §319. OBSTRUCTION AND THEIR REMOVAL - (11)