

Freedom to keep its P.O.

A proposal to make the Freedom post office a branch of the Watsonville office has been dropped, and a new Freedom postmaster will be appointed within the next two or three months.

Some consideration is being given to shifting some Watsonville routes to the Freedom post office, but a decision on that is months away.

That word came Wednesday from William H. Lawrence, San Jose postmaster whose managerial jurisdiction extends to the post offices in Santa Clara, Santa Cruz and San Benito counties.

Lawrence said the decision was made because it was felt "a postal service savings could be made" by not consolidating.

Freedom on Guard, a civic organization in Freedom, had vigorously fought the consolidation proposal, contending that it would have meant a loss of one of Freedom's major identifying institutions. The organization had also suggested that routes be transferred from the Watsonville post office to the Freedom post office to relieve overcrowding in the Watsonville facility.

Lawrence said only applicants from within the Postal Service will be considered for the postmaster's job, and the selection will be made on the basis of the postal merit system.

Currently running the Freedom post office is Officer in Charge Mary Dye. She is not eligible for the postmaster's job, Lawrence said, because of postal system rules.

The salary for the Freedom job will range between \$23,700 and \$31,300 annually. It will take two to three months to receive and review the applications and make the selection.

Now under consideration is a plan to move some routes — some rural and some not — from Watsonville to Freedom and shift four or five postal workers to handle them. This would involve routes that serve Watsonville areas adjacent to Freedom, but Lawrence emphasized if the move is made, the people involved would retain their present Watsonville addresses and zip codes.

"If and when we decide to do this," he said, "we would contact all the people on those routes to see what the reaction would be. There will be no attempt to change addresses, city, zip or anything. We will not force anyone to do anything."