**Zip Code/Address Issue ListServ Responses**

**Question posed by Montreat:**

*The Town of Montreat has difficulty with a myriad of issues related to its zip code. The Town essentially has its own zip code for PO boxes, but shares a zip code with a neighboring municipality for physical addresses. So a resident might have a PO box like P.O. 456, Montreat NC, 28757, but their street address is 123 Shenandoah Dr., Black Mountain NC, 28711 – even though they live in Montreat. This causes confusion with voter registration, UPS/FedEx delivery, emergency notification systems like the apple watch, corona virus reporting, etc.*

*Has anyone had issues with their zip code alignment? Have you been able align your physical zip code with your mailing zip code?*

**Some of the 15 responses from NC municipality managers, administrators, and GIS managers:**

* That is an issue everywhere. Several cities have multiple zip codes and overlapping boundaries with neighboring cities. For example, in Kannapolis we have five zip codes (three Kannapolis, one Concord, and one Davidson). It's an act of Congress to get the physical zip codes re-assigned or realigned. We have tried several times over the past 16 years, with the help of our Congressional delegation to get the postal service to consider changing, but to no avail. It's a futile effort...but good luck!
* The Town of Sharpsburg lies in three counties and all addresses that are here have a Rocky Mount address attached to them. Therefore, if you live here, you must get a P.O. Box to get mail here in town. They have tried for year to get this corrected. They have had no luck change it.
* We've been fighting this issue for the better part of two decades as there are multiple zip codes for citizens in Graham and it creates mass confusion in service delivery.  We've had Congressmen from both sides of the aisle working on this but no luck whatsoever.  Except for a meeting with local postmasters.  In all this I've learned two primary things:
  1. The USPS doesn't care about anything but delivering mail;
  2. The USPS doesn't have a good handle on their routes (When we met with them once they brought a gas station map with highlighter marks)
* There are more than a few cases where zip codes cross state lines. Crossing county and municipal boundaries is incredibly common. I think some are not even contiguous shapes. The long and the short of it is that the USPS considers zip codes to be for the purpose of facilitating mail delivery, period.
* Hope this isn't an unwelcome intrusion-I manage the Data Science program for one of the LME/MCOs and have looked into this quite a bit.
* One thing to bear in mind with GIS mapping is that a lot of GIS and analytics software actually tend to, by default, use ZCTAs(Zip Code Tabulation Areas) which are developed by the Census Bureau, not the Post Office. To make a long story short, ZCTAs are based on zip codes and try to sand off some of the rough edges that zip codes present for mapping, statistical analysis, etc.
* We have had some success with a bit of resistance petitioning for zip code reassignment for new neighborhoods so the mailing address aligns with the municipality they live in. We have not had success on reassignment of existing neighborhoods to a new postal zip code/city name. This ultimately comes down to postmaster decision making, and it is important for your addressing staff to build a good relationship with the local postmaster.
* 2nd what Eddie said. It is more than an act of Congress. Zip Codes are based upon postal union routes. You will waste a lot of time and will get nothing done.
* Unfortunately I would have to echo what the others have said. In my career I have never heard of a successful effort to adjust postal codes. To quote the advice of an old, wise friend - sharpen a pencil really sharp and insert it directly into your eye. It will ultimately be less painful...
* My last communication with the Postmaster included the words "breathtaking incompetency" and we suffer the consequences also of a larger area than the actual Town having one zip code...don't know what the solution actually is, but I know it takes an inordinate amount of time to get any movement whatsoever. Echo the "good luck" wishes.
* Run away! Seriously, I went round and round with USPS over zip code issues here in southern Moore County for over two years and it was an even worse experience then when I went through the process of getting a zip code established for a suburban community in Ohio more than twenty years ago. Pulling in our Congressional Representative got an initial phone call/reply out of them, only for them to go "dark" again after providing multiple GIS maps and pages of information they requested to "begin" the process. We finally gave up after repeated efforts with not even a "no" response.
* In Granite Falls, we have the opposite problem. Our population is around 4,700 but the Granite Falls Post Office delivers mail to approximately 13,000 residents. The 28630 zip code covers all 13,000 residents which means that every person that commits a crime that resides in the 28630 zip code makes the local and evening news as a Granite Falls woman or Granite Falls man. I have had to explain to citizens that call me about how our Town isn’t safe anymore that the crimes aren’t always committed by people that actually live in Town.