

Crime surge limits after-hour access to post offices

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The Valley Springs post office has limited hours customers have access to their mailboxes due to thefts and vandalism.

“The sanctity of the mail is our highest priority,” said acting Valley Springs Postmaster Norma Stewart.

Auto-locking doors now close the Valley Springs post office lobby from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Another factor in closing the lobby at night was for health and hygiene reasons, she said, as vagrants were regularly sleeping inside.

Calaveras County post offices have been constant targets of mail thieves.

Earlier this week a 41-year-old Modesto man was sentenced to two years in federal prison for the 2020 burglary of the Wallace post office and there was a late night break-in last week at the Mokelumne Hill post office.

The Burson post office, a target of vandalism and theft over the years, has an auto-locked lobby from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. weekdays and 5 p.m. to 7 a.m. on weekends.

Another recent casualty was the mail drop box at the intersection of State Route 26 and Vista Del Lago Drive. It appears someone plowed into the box with a vehicle to gain access to the contents. They were unsuccessful, but Stewart said there are no plans to replace the box, which saves La Contenta residents a four-mile round trip to the post office if they have outgoing mail.