# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

JAN 1 6 1990

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

(1 omi 10-300a). Type all omiles.			
1. Name of Property			
	in Post Office		
other names/site number N/A			
2. Location			
street & number 275 Thi	.rd	N/Ar	ot for publication
city, town Elko		N/A	ricinity
state Nevada coo	e NV county Elko	code 007	zip code 89801
	-		
3. Classification			
Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources	s within Property
private	X building(s)	Contributing No	oncontributing
public-local	district	1	buildings
public-State	site		sites
X public-Federal	structure		structures
E pasio i cacian	object		objects
		<del></del> <del></del>	0 Total
Name of related multiple property	listina.	Number of contributing	ng resources previously
Historic U.S. Post 1891-1941	Offices in Nevada.		Register0
		noted in the realiend	Tiogistor
4. State/Federal Agency Cert	ification		
Signature of certifying official  State or Federal agency and bureau  In my opinion, the property  Signature of commenting or other of	meets does not meet the National Re	gister criteria.  See contir	nuation sheet.
State or Federal agency and bureau	<del></del>		
Clate of Federal agoney and bureau			
5. National Park Service Cert	ification		
I, hereby, certify that this property			, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,
entered in the National Registe See continuation sheet. determined eligible for the Nati Register. See continuation sh determined not eligible for the National Register.	onal Amy Feder	man	2/28/20
removed from the National Reg			
	Signature of	the Keeper	Date of Action

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions) U.S. Post Office
Materials (substituting from instructions)
Materials (enter categories from instructions)
foundation <u>Concrete</u> walls <u>Brick</u>
roof <u>Clay tile</u> other Terra cotta

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Elko Post Office is a two-story buff-colored brick building on a raised basement. Relatively flat and symmetrically-arranged, the front facade consists of a five-bay central section flanked by slightly projecting single-bay end The first story bays of the central section are framed by semi-circular arches while the bays of the second story are paired and framed with flat arches. The bays of the end wings are flat-arched. A projecting cornice supported by molded brackets terminates the facade. The building is covered by a hipped red Mission tile roof. Reinforced concrete is used for footings, basement walls, and floor slabs. Structural steel frames the brick walls. The various detailing elements such as quoins, door and window bay framing, belt courses, brackets, and cornice are of molded terra cotta. Granite is used to face the exposed basement walls and front entry steps and landing.

#### PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The front facade (facing Third Street) is divided into seven bays: five bays in the central section and one bay in each of the slightly projecting (approximately six inches) end wings. The raised basement wall is faced with granite which extends from grade to a terra-cotta water table course. A terra-cotta belt course, at the sill line of the second story, is the only break in the "buff matt" pressed brick facade (in Flemish bond). A terra-cotta entablature terminates the facade. Decorative elements of the entablature include molded brackets which support a projecting molded cornice. A hipped roof, clad with red Mission tile, covers the building to which it imparts a Mediterranean flavor.

The first story of the central section includes a centered entry bay flanked on each side by two window bays. All are semi-circular-arched and framed in molded terra cotta. Extending from the water table, the window frames are flat with an inset of molded terra cotta in a torus pattern-a slender column capped by a Corinthian capital which, in turn, joins a torus pattern arch inside the major arch. The see continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance	
Certifying official has considered the significance of this proper nationally	erty in relation to other properties:
Applicable National Register Criteria XA BXC	□ D
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)	DEFG
Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance Significant Dates
Architecture Politics/Government	1933-1941 Site Acq1932 Const1933
	Cultural Affiliation
Significant Person	Architect/Builder
N/A	Wetmore, James A., Acting Supervising Architect/Federal Government; Madsen, Carl C., Denver, Contractor

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Elko MPO is a well-preserved and essentially unaltered example of a small town combined post office and federal office building. An imposing and stately building, the Post Office represents the traditional Beaux-Arts design philosophy of the Office of the Supervising Architect. Even though it was constructed in the early Depression, its roots lie in the first two decades of the century. The building is also a symbol of the federal government and the link, through elected representatives, between that government and the local citizens. It is the city's first and only federal building and represents the efforts of local lobbying efforts to gain federal recognition for the city.

#### ARCHITECTURE

In the Mediterranean Revival style, the two story brick building represents the fine craftsmanship and attention to detail of the federal government. The main entry is particularly notable for its decorative terra-cotta architrave. The building is the only example of its design type in Elko. Though the building was constructed in the early Depression era, its design is strongly linked with the first two decades of the century. In essence, it is a transitional building, for those that followed in the mid-to late-1930s were simplified and stripped of historical architectural detailing. The influence of the International Style and the economies and standardization invoked by the Depression era public building programs brought simpler buildings to the American scene.

While the design of this building is not duplicated in the West, numerous buildings from the same period utilized the same basic proportions, facade articulation, and size as

#### Major Bibliographical References 1. Elko Independent, various articles 1929-1933. 2. Elko Free Press, various articles 1923-1925. 3. Butterfield, Roger. "Elko County." Life, April 18, 1949, pp. 99-114. 4. Original Architectural Drawings, 1932. See continuation sheet Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) Primary location of additional data: has been requested State historic preservation office previously listed in the National Register Other State agency previously determined eligible by the National Register X Federal agency designated a National Historic Landmark Local government recorded by Historic American Buildings University Survey # Other Specify repository: USPS Facilities Service Center recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # San Bruno, CA 94099-0330 10. Geographical Data Acreage of property \_\_0.62 **UTM References** A [11] [60,4|31,0| | 45| 20 | 4 | 00 | Zone Easting Northing Zone Quadrangle name: Elko West See continuation sheet Verbal Boundary Description Lots 1 - 6, East 15' of Lot 7, East 15' of the Northwest 45' of Lot 18, Northwest 45' of Lots 19 - 24, Block E, City of Elko. South corner of Commercial Street and Third Street. Beginning at the north corner, thence Southeast 165', Southwest 165', Northwest 165', Northeast 165' to point of beginning. X See continuation sheet **Boundary Justification** The boundary includes the property originally purchased by the federal government for the post office site. See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title H.J. "Jim" Kolva, Project Manager; Steve Franks, Research Assistant organization Institute for Urban & Local Studies date February 1989 street & number West 705 1st Avenue telephone (509) 458-6219 city or town Spokane state WA zip code 99204

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number / Fage EIKO MP	Section number	7	Page	_ 1	Elko	MPC
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Decorative panels, also of molded terra cotta, are within the frames between the sills and the top of the granite basement wall. The sash is double-hung steel with fifteen-overten lights and ten-light transoms within the arches. At the second story are five flat-arched window bays aligned over the first floor bays. Also framed in molded terra cotta, these bays consist of paired double-hung four-over-four-light steel sash separated by terra-cotta mullions in the form of pilasters.

The main entry is approached by six granite steps and a granite landing. Sloping granite buttresses flank the sides of the stairs. The entry consists of double aluminum-framed glass doors (which replaced the original doors). A narrow glass strip is set above the door frame with the lettering "Elko, Nevada 89801." (Apparently this strip fills the gap which was occupied by the taller original doors.) glass panel is an aluminum transom bar with the raised letters "United States Post Office." Above the transom bar is a fourteen-light transom window and above it and within the arch is a nineteen-light window. Both are fixed aluminum sash. Framing the entry bay is a compound terra-cotta architrave. The extrados is supported by flat, unadorned pilasters, with bas-relief buffalo capitals. Perched atop the capitals are bas-relief eagles. The remainder of the arch consists of four plain segments which alternate with two floral segments and a keystone which depicts the head of an American Indian. The intrados, a three-quarter-round molding in a foliated pattern, is supported by three-quarterround columns decorated with an incised twist pattern. Foliated capitals with an egg and dart molding complete the pilasters. Wrought-iron light fixtures occupy the wall on either side of the entry. Above the arch and below the second story windows are octagon-shaped terra-cotta bas-relief panels.

The first and second story window bays of the end wings are flat-arched, and framed with flat terra-cotta surrounds. The surrounds of the first floor bays are plain except for the lintels which have raised edge molding and a floral bas relief at the ends. The sash is eight-over-eight-light, double-hung steel with a four-light transom window above.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number7 P	age2	Elko	MPC
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The second story windows are shorter and narrower than those of the first floor. Framing consists of a narrow sill, and plain, flat surrounds. Small brackets decorate the upper inside corners of the windows and provide apparent support to the lintels.

The end facades (north and south) are identical. As with the front facade, granite facing covers the foundation, which is separated from the brick with a terra-cotta water table course. Three window bays divide the facades. The window detailing is identical to the first and second floor windows of the end wings of the front facade. The second story sill line belt course extends from the front to the sides as does the terminating entablature. Within the last couple of years an exterior steel fire escape has been added to the south end.

The rear facade (west) consists of the same brick and terra cotta detailing as described. Terra-cotta quoins mark the corners of the two rearward wings which form a "U" plan for the second floor. Projecting from the wings is a loading vestibule and brick-enclosed loading platform. Three rustcolored metal bay doors provide access to the loading area. A metal cornice, also rust-colored, projects slightly over the loading area. Mechanical equipment and a steel stairway are on top of the loading vestibule roof. The wall behind the loading area extends to the sill line belt course of the rear windows and fills the gap between the two wings. wall of the second floor is recessed above this line. copper-clad skylight roof is visible in this recessed portion. The terra cotta cornice marks the juncture of the wall and tile roof along the recession; the bracketed frieze, however, ends at the ends of the extending wings.

A mobile unit is attached to the northwest corner of the building and consists of vertically-aligned, painted T-lll. The roof is slightly pitched brown composition. The mobile unit was added in 1979 and expanded in 1982. This addition as well as the addition of a post office box unit in the central lobby in the early-1980s are responses to the growth of the local postal area and lack of space in the orginal building.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_8 Page \_1 \_\_ Elko MPO

the Elko building. The design and plans are, to a large degree, standardized but not to the degree (such as having exact duplicates) that prevailed during the later years of the Depression. The rich detailing of the entry architrave distinguishes the building from others of its form and type. The exterior of the building is essentially unaltered from its original construction. As mentioned, the original doors have been replaced and a fire escape has been added to the south end. Given its period of construction and architectural quality, the building is locally significant under Criterion C.

#### POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

The building serves as a monumental symbol of the Federal government and was the first federally-constructed post office in Elko. It also represents many years of local lobbying efforts by local citizens and the successful culmination of those efforts. The appropriation and site selection phases of the building's evolution were important local events that were followed closely by the local press. When the post office appropriation was first reported, the Elko Independent wrote that the news would "be hailed with much enthusiasm by the Elko Chamber of Commerce and other civic organizations which have urged representatives in Washington to use their efforts to secure a federal building for this city" and concluded by noting that Elko citizens could "rejoice over the fact we have at last secured the building. It is an accomplishment worth while. The site of the federal building became an issue that was actively and hotly discussed in the community. The <u>Independent</u> was moved to write: "It has been a long time since any subject so absorbingly held public interest as the federal building and the hold it has taken in Elko was well illustrated yesterday when the community was overrun with discussions and discussers."

As a symbol of the linkage between local citizens and their elected representatives in Washington and federal recognition of Elko's regional importance, the building is locally significant under Criterion A.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_8 Page \_\_2 Elko MPO

#### LOCAL CONTEXT

Elko, the largest city in northeastern Nevada, is on the Humboldt River approximately midway between Salt Lake City, Utah and Reno. As the Elko County seat, Elko ("the City of Festivals") is the center for government as well as ranching, mining, and tourist operations. Of the county's 17,000 residents, approximately 10,000 reside in Elko.

Elko was founded in late 1868 by the Central Pacific Railroad as a railroad townsite, as it was building eastward to meet the westbound Union Pacific Railroad. The area had been a stopping point for the wagon trains of settlers heading west, who traveled close to the Humboldt River. The town grew quickly around the railroad when it arrived; by early 1869 freight and passenger traffic began pouring in and out of Elko as it became a supply and transportation center for the region's silver mines. Within six months of its founding Elko had a population of 2,000 and 22 merchandise stores, 3 hardware stores, 2 express offices, 5 lumber yards, 10 blacksmith shops, 4 wagon shops, 4 drug stores, 2 hotels, 17 restaurants, 5 barber shops, 8 stables, 8 physicians, and 8 attorneys. By 1870 Elko had a population of 4,000 to 5,000. In 1873 the University of Nevada was authorized at Elko (it remained there until 1885 when it was moved to Reno). quickly developed into the center of the region's mining and livestock industries, as well as the political and social center of the huge (over 17,000 square miles) Elko County.

After the blizzards of 1889-90 decimated the livestock industry, however, Elko declined rapidly; in 1904 Elko had a population of only about 800 and a business center six blocks long. Elko's fortunes improved with the construction of the Western Pacific Railroad around 1907 and rising beef and wool prices; in 1910 a new courthouse was built and in 1917 the city was incorporated. By 1920 Elko's population had increased to 2,173, and its prosperity continued until the advent of the Depression. The development of a new industry—tourism—assisted Elko's recovery, though livestock would become the backbone of Elko's economy. Elko's steady growth continued even during the Depression, its population growing from 3,217 in 1930 to 4,094 in 1940.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number	8	Page	3	Elko	MP
Occion number		, ago			

By the 1940s Elko was so prosperous through its cattle-raising that <u>Life</u> magazine profiled the town, reporting "one of the minor signs of Elko County's prosperity is a shortage of \$100 bills at its two leading banks" and that Elko store-keepers were "experiencing an acute shortage of \$50 Stetson hats." <u>Life</u> also wrote of Elko's status as an entertainment center, noting the city had "two small movie theaters, 50 saloons and gambling places and the oldest, most respectedly [sic] conducted red-light district in Nevada." By 1950 Elko's population had climbed to 5,393. Elko's steady growth has continued, growing to 6,298 in 1960 to 7,621 in 1970 to 8,758 in 1980. Elko is presently undergoing substantial growth because of the resurgence of gold mining in the area.

The post office is in the southwestern corner of the central business district, fronting Third Street with the north property line along Commercial Street. Several railroad tracks (Southern Pacific Railroad) run along the north side of Commercial Street, with Railroad Street north of the tracks. One block further north is Idaho Street, which is the main commercial and through street of Elko.

The uses surrounding the Post Office are commercial and light industrial. None of the immediately surrounding buildings are architecturally or historically significant. To the west of the Post Office is a trucking/warehouse area. Similar uses are to the south, between the post office and the Amtrak depot. Various commercial uses are to the north and east of the Post Office. The area to the east includes the city's core and consists of hotels, banks, restaurants and various retail, wholesale, and service facilities. Immediately east of the Post Office (across Third Street) is the three-story Stockman Motel and Casino which was constructed in the late-1950s.

### LOCAL NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ELKO MAIN POST OFFICE

"Shuttle is Refueled Here in Less Than Ten Minutes" headlined the Elko Independent on August 27th, 1929. A transcontinental endurance mail plane had passed over Elko and was refueled in mid-air on its route between Oakland and New York. Other important news of the time included the fact that new deposits of silver and copper had been discovered in

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_ 8 Page \_\_4 Elko MPO

the region (articles of August 13th and 15th), a \$50,000 addition to the Commercial Hotel was planned (October 29th article--which also included the headline "Crashing Stock Market Brings Prediction of Panic"), and that 10,000 head of lambs valued at \$120,000 had left Elko for the east (October 15th). On December 3rd the <u>Independent</u> reported that Harold Brown had been appointed Elko postmaster by Congressman S. S. Arentz and that local business trade was good--there was no adverse reaction to the stock market crash. It was also reported that the Masonic & Odd Fellows Hall had been renovated, a new grammar school would soon be opening, and the Southern Pacific Company intended to employ 400 men in Elko County in 1930 to lay double track between Ogden and San Francisco (articles of December 5th, 19th, and 24th).

On January 23rd, 1930 the <u>Independent</u> reported "Building Again Before Chamber." At the most recent Chamber of Commerce meeting, the matter of obtaining an appropriation for a federal building became the leading action item. Appropriations had recently been made for other cities in the state, but none for Elko. A motion was made to contact Senator Tasker L. Oddie and Congressman Arentz immediately. (Oddie had introduced a federal building appropriations bill in the Senate with Congressman Richards doing the same in the House as early as 1923 (<u>Elko Free Press</u>, December 19th, 1923). Two years later he and Arentz introduced bills, but again without success (<u>Press</u>, December 9th, 1925).

That spring many improvements were reported planned for the area: a \$10,000 air mail landing field and new \$20,000 septic tank were planned, the city was going to build 22 new cabins at the city camp ground (at a total cost of \$4,930), and the Southern Pacific Railroad planned to spend half a million dollars on track improvements in Elko County (articles of March 11th, April 8th, and April 19th). In May it was reported that Elko's population had grown from 2,173 in 1920 to 3,208 in 1930 and that the Elko County mining districts were planning a busy year, despite depressed markets (May 15th and 17th articles). On June 26th, however, it was announced that 400 men were to be laid off by the Southern Pacific Railroad, due to slow freight shipments.

"\$140,000 Federal Building Assured For This City" reported the <u>Independent</u> on July 5th. A message had been

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number	8	Page	5	Elko	MPO
Section number.		raye			

received from Sen. Odie that the recently passed Deficiency Appropriations Bill contained an item for Elko. Odie wrote: "I join the people of Elko in feeling highly elated over the success after years of efforts, in securing this building." Odie also requested the Treasury Department to expedite site selection and acquisition. The paper noted that the news would "be hailed with much enthusiasm by the Elko Chamber of Commerce and other civic organizations which have urged representatives in Washington to use their efforts to secure a federal building for this city." An editorial that day gave credit to the people of Elko and their determination and the interest of their representatives in Washington. It also discussed possible sites, and concluded by noting that Elko citizens could "rejoice over the fact we have at last secured the building. It is an accomplishment worth while."

News of the site selection for the post office was reported frequently during the rest of 1930. On July 15th the paper wrote that "Everyone is more or less interested in the selection of a site for the proposed federal building for this city"; local businessmen had suggested that the old high school property be used. When on August 19th it was reported that three sites had been offered, however, the school site was not one of them. (On August 16th it was also reported that \$1,599,000 in federal aid highway funds was being sent to Nevada, to relieve unemployment.) In November two new sites were offered (November 8th article) and the County Commissioners discussed but took no action regarding offering the high school site (November 11th). Since there was a difference of opinion regarding the school site, a questionnaire was being prepared for circulation. A tentative selling price of \$20,000 was reported, and yet another possible site on Third Street was described. On November 29th it was reported that the County Commissioners had tabled the school site proposal, since "federal experts" had advised that while the site was acceptable, the asking price of \$26,000 was not. The government would pay no more than \$15,000. In December a committee was appointed by the Chamber of Commerce to investigate the sites, most of which were in excess of the \$15,000 limit. Once the committee selected a site, Senators Pittman and Oddie and Cong. Arentz would be asked to recommend that the site be purchased immediately (December 4th). On December 18th the paper reported news of a Chamber

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section nu	mber	8	Page	6	Elko	MPO
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of Commerce luncheon, which "adjourned with a long argument over the post office site looming."

Many articles appeared in the **Independent** in early 1931 regarding the post office site and the selection process. An article of April 9th also reported that the Elko Chamber of Commerce was seeking a Federal Court for Elko and wanted provisions made for it in the proposed federal building (the effort did not succeed). On July 6th it was reported that Senator Oddie had telegrammed that two post office inspectors had concurred in recommending a site offered by Morley Griswold for \$20,000 on the south corner of 3rd and Commercial Streets (Puccinelli-Frantini property). One week later it was reported that citizens opposed to putting the federal building at the extreme southwest corner of town had urged the old school site instead (July 13th article). August 14th it was reported that the Griswold property at the extreme south end of town between the South & Western railroad tracks containing the old Parker garage and soft drink establishment had been chosen. In addition, the County Commissioners had refused to vote on the school site, in spite of a delegation requesting that the site be offered.

Controversy over the selected site continued. On September 9th it was reported that the school site would finally be formally offered for \$20,000, but that businessmen near the 3rd & Commercial site would raise \$5,000 to lower that site's price to \$15,000. One week later it was reported that the City Council had passed three resolutions regarding the federal building: Congress would be requested to approve a federal court for Elko, the federal building should have court facilities, and the federal building should not be constructed piecemeal and the chosen site, because it was between two railroad tracks, was not suitable for a court. Thus, selection of a site should be postponed (September 16th "Controversy Waxes Hot" headlined the <u>Independent</u> article). on September 18th. The federal building site was causing considerable discord in Elko; the paper reported that: "It has been a long time since any subject so absorbingly held public interest as the federal building and the hold it has taken in Elko was well illustrated yesterday when the community was overrun with discussions and discussers."

In early 1932 it was reported that the government was

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_8 Page \_\_7 \_\_ Elko MPO

seeking condemnation of the selected site and \$20,000 had been deposited (February 15th article). But on March 25th the <u>Independent</u> headlined: "Investigation Looms for P.O. Building Here. Indications of collusion and "salve spreading" regarding the site had surfaced. The federal architect who had selected the site, William A. Newman, in his wife's alimony trial in San Francisco, had been asked what his duties were. Newman replied: "To take people out and treat them and give them a good time and get them to donate their properties to the government -- to make them happy and pleased to make the donation." The paper reported that there was possibility of collusion between Newman and factions opposed to an Idaho Street post office location, and that "Citizens were harsh in their criticism of Newman ... and declare that he utterly failed to carry out requirements of the federal government which specifies the building shall be in the center of population." An Independent editorial of May 27th reflected on the federal building "salve":

The Elko Independent has always felt that the site chosen for the federal building was not a proper one, an opinion that is shared by the majority of the people in this city. However, the site has been chosen ... and we gracefully admit defeat of the furtherance of a plan to have a federal building more centrally located.

On June 24th it was reported that title on the site property had cleared and work was expected to start soon.

On June 29th it was announced that the Senate had approved a \$1,100,000,000 appropriation bill after a "4 month battle"; the bill included funds for Elko's post office, as well as for Reno, Las Vegas, and Ely. By September, 30 men were pouring concrete for the first floor of Elko's long-awaited building on its controversial site (September 14th article). Yet more controversy surfaced on October 12th, when it was reported that the Department of Labor's Commissioner of Conciliation was in Elko regarding complaints that the contractor, Carl C. Madson Construction Co. of Denver, was not hiring local labor or paying enough. It was reported though that 94% local labor was being hired, the wage scale was satisfactory, and the contractor would comply with the Davis-Bacon Act.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

	Section	number	88	Page	8	Elko	MPC
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An article of November 9th announced that Roosevelt had been "swept" into the White House by an "avalanche of ballots" and that P. A. McCarran (D) had defeated Oddie. On November 14th it was reported that the First National Bank of Elko had opened after being closed for two weeks and there was no evidence of a "run." On the 18th it was revealed that work on the federal building was stopping due to weather conditions that made work hazardous; the contractor had asked for a time extension, stonework for the first floor was set, and work was proceeding satisfactorily.

News of early 1933 included a national bank holiday, rising wool prices (to 20 cents a pound), and that Congressman McCarren was seeking a reservoir site for Elko County (articles of March 6th, May 15th, and August 2nd). On August 11th it was reported that nine offices were expecting to move into the new federal building in three weeks and that marble work was being completed on the building. The federal agencies that would occupy these offices (nine on the second floor and nine in the basement) included the bureau of internal revenue, department of agriculture, and fish and wild-life. The postal department moved into its first floor quarters on August 29th. An article of November 20th reported that the federal building would be dedicated the following Saturday. On November 20th the dedication program, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, was announced: Scrugham had telegrammed that he could not attend and designated J.E. Robbins, the local Chairman of the Democratic Central Committee, instead. Robbins, however, "could not preside because of his former stand on the location of the building and pressing business affairs." Various people were scheduled to speak and the public was invited to attend.

At the present time, the building functions as Elko's main post office and continues to house federal agencies in basement and second floor offices. These agencies include the internal revenue service, geological survey, Indian health, national weather service, department of health and civil service testing.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section numberPhotos Page \_1 Elko

The following information is the same for all the photographs listed:

- 1. Elko MPO
- 2. Elko, Nevada
- 3. Jim Kolva
- 4. June 1988
- 5. Negatives on file at USPS Facilities Service Center, San Bruno, CA.

Photo No. 1 (negative #3)

6. View to southwest

Photo No. 2 (negative #22)

6. View of detail of central facade

Photo No. 3 (negative #5)

6. View to west

EIKO

**United States Department of the Interior** National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1 Elko MPO

