

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	FEB 12 1986
DATE ENTERED	MAR 14 1986

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Dillon Post Office

AND/OR COMMON

Dillon Main Post Office

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

117 South Idaho Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Dillon

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1

NA VICINITY OF

STATE

Montana

CODE  
30

COUNTY

Beaverhead

CODE  
001

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thematic Group	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

U.S. Postal Service, Western Regional Headquarters

STREET & NUMBER

850 Cherry Avenue

CITY, TOWN

San Bruno

NA VICINITY OF

California

STATE

94099

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Beaverhead County Assessor's Office

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Dillon

STATE

Montana

59725

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Historic Resources of Dillon

DATE

1982

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Montana State Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN

Helena

STATE

Montana

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE <u>NA</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Dillon Main Post Office is a two story red brick structure on a raised basement. Reinforced concrete and steel framing provide structural support. The front facade is Classically proportioned and symmetrical in arrangement. Characteristic of mid-1930s federal design, the five bayed facade is flat and devoid of major ornamentation. However, Classical influences are shown in the round-arched Palladian windows which flank each side of the round-arched entry bay. Flat-arched window bays mark the outside corners of the facade. Five smaller window bays, aligned over those of the first floor, break the otherwise plain second floor. A simple projected cornice terminates the second story. The building is well-preserved and with the exception of an unobtrusive rear addition (1963) is unaltered.

### PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Dillon Post Office is two stories in height on a raised basement. The footings and basement are constructed of reinforced concrete. Structural steel frames the first and second stories. The exterior is faced with red brick, trimmed with sandstone. The roof is flat, built-up tar composition. The entry stairs and handicapped ramp (extending to left) are concrete with aluminum railings.

The front facade (southeast) is symmetrical, classically proportioned and flat. Five bays divide the facade and include the centered entry bay with two window bays on either side. The exposed portion of the basement wall is faced with sandstone. A sandstone-faced (painted) terrace extends eight feet forward of the main facade and spans the area including the entry and immediately flanking window bays. Single, free-standing cast iron lanterns resting atop sandstone piers flank the five steps approaching the entry. The steps and landing are concrete (originally granite steps and tiled entry terraces). Red brick faces the first and second stories. The top of the second story is marked by a narrow plain sandstone frieze and slightly projecting molded sandstone

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cornice. "United States Post Office, Dillon Montana" in bronze letters is located in the frieze. A solid brick parapet rests atop the cornice and is capped by a sandstone coping course.

The entry consists of double aluminum-framed glass doors (original doors replaced). A wooden door head with two recessed panels lies above the doors. The doors are framed by fluted flat wooden pilasters which rest on a sandstone belt course (water table). The pilasters support a simple wooden entablature. Molded sandstone springers extend horizontally from the ends of the entablature and support a semi-circular gauged brick arch. A molded sandstone key-stone completes the arch. Within the brick arch is a arched wooden panel which is scalloped in a fan pattern. The wooden panel encloses an arched window with mullions of interlocking arch segments (10 lights).

Single palladian windows flank each side of the entry. The windows consist of 12-over-12 light double hung wood sash flanked by 5-light side lights. The side lights are framed by plain flat wooden pilasters which extend from the sandstone water table to a simple wooden entablature. Aluminum (natural) storm windows cover the window sections. Recessed wooden panels lie between the wooden sills of each of the window sections and the water table. The window is topped by a semi-circular arch treated identically to the arch over the entry bay.

The end windows are flat-arched, topped by a molded sandstone lintel. The sash is double hung with 8-over-12 lights. Simple wooden panels are located beneath the sills and extend to the sandstone water table. Wrought iron balconets front the panels. Aluminum (natural) storm windows cover the windows.

Five flat-arched windows aligned over the first floor bays are located in the second story. The windows are identical to each other and consist of 8-over-8 light

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double-hung wood sash. A flat sandstone sill and flat gauged brick arch frames the window openings. A molded sandstone keystone completes the arch.

The side facades of the original portion of the building are identical. Each contains five equally spaced window bays. The first floor windows are 8-over-12 double hung wood sash. The end windows are identical to the end windows of the front facade. The three interior windows are framed by flat gauged brick arches, with molded sandstone keystones and flat sandstone sills. The second floor windows are identical to those of the second floor of the front facade. The remainder of the facade treatment is carried through from the front facade.

The rear addition, constructed in 1963, is faced with red brick and rests on an exposed concrete foundation. The addition terminates at the sill line of the second floor windows with a flat concrete coping course. Two fixed metal sash windows (3-light) and a single metal pedestrian door occupy the southwest facade. The door is located at the juncture of the addition and the original building. The rear elevation consists of four equally spaced metal sash windows. Five windows, identical to those of the windows of the side and front facades, are visible above the addition on the second floor of the original building. The northeast facade is dominated by the loading platform which opens to the side. The platform extends from the facade line and is enclosed with brick. The roof is flat metal with a projecting marquee. A metal shed is attached to the north corner.

Interior materials consist of the following: basement: concrete floors, walls (some quarry block), and ceiling; first floor lobby: quarry tile floors, plaster walls with wood wainscotting, and acoustical tile ceiling (dropped below original plaster ceiling); work room: asphalt plank floors, plaster walls with 4-foot wood wainscotting, and plaster ceiling; postmaster's office: carpeted floors, plaster walls and dropped

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acoustical tile ceiling; swing room: sheet vinyl floor, plaster walls, and dropped acoustical tile ceiling; and second floor: vinyl asbestos tile and carpeted floors, plaster walls, and plaster and acoustical tile ceilings.

The south end of the lobby contains a mural entitled "News From the States" (approximately 5' by 12', located over the postmaster's door). The mural was executed by Elizabeth Lochrie in 1938 for a sum of \$665. The mural depicts a group including ranchers, farmers, and Indians reading a newspaper spread on a rutted wagon road.

Elizabeth Lochrie was a prominent Montana artist who was born in Deer Lodge in 1890 (deceased in 1981). She attended Deer Lodge schools and studied art at the Pratt Institute with summer courses at Stanford University. Ms. Lochrie resided in Butte and is represented in collections in Montana and throughout the nation. Other major mural works include post offices in Burley (1938) and St. Anthony (1939), Idaho, and the State Hospital in Galen, Montana. In addition to oil, she worked in water color (first in 1939 national water color competition), pencil (first in 1937 national pencil competition), and bronze. She has exhibited at major galleries throughout the United States.



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The building is also one of the city's most imposing downtown building and with the 1914 Municipal Building (three story brick, Classically-inspired) and the Beaverhead County Courthouse (three story sandstone with tower, Richardson Romanesque influence), represents one of three levels of government in the city. Although possessing some detailing similar to the Municipal Building, the design of the post office is unique in the city. As per Criterion C, the building is locally significant as a rare example of its design type. The Carnegie Library, in its rich stone Richardson Romanesque facade, is located immediately north of the post office. The library is listed in the National Historic Register. The post office is also located in a potential historic district which would include several downtown commercial blocks.

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

The building was the city's first federally constructed post office. It was constructed during a period in which the city's economy was beginning a slow recovery from stagnation in the 1920s and early 1930s (during the 1920s the population decreased). The local citizens had been lobbying hard for a federal building. Petitions were circulated in support of the post office so as to demonstrate to the federal government that Dillon wanted the building. The building's construction would give needed employment to Dillon citizens and have a positive economic benefit. Although some citizens felt that the proposed project was wasteful federal spending, others offered to solicit subscriptions to purchase the land. The construction of the building is a legacy of success by local citizens in securing a federal building for their city in time of economic hardship. In Symbolizing the success of participatory democracy as well as the federal governments massive public building programs of the Depression, the building is locally significant under Criterion A.

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LOCAL CONTEXT

Dillon is the county seat of Beaverhead County, located in the southwestern corner of the state. With a 1980 population of 3,980. Dillon is the trade center for the surrounding agricultural, mining, and timber region as well as a governmental center.

The Dillon area was first explored in 1805 by the Lewis and Clark Expedition which camped north of the present city. The expedition was followed by trappers and fur traders, then by ranchers and, with the discovery of gold in the Bannack area in 1862, by miners. Dillon was settled in 1862 and served as the early trade center for the local miners and ranchers. The current townsite was originally ranch owned by Richard Deacon. When Deacon refused to provide right of way through his ranch for the northward extension of the Union Pacific Railroad to Butte, several businessmen purchased the ranch. The town was immediately platted and lots were offered for sale. The first post office was established as Terminus with Thomas B. Warren as postmaster on March 30, 1880. It might be noted that the Terminus name was used to designate the changing terminal point of the Utah and Northern Railroad as it was extended northward from Salt Lake. The railroad actually reached present-day Dillon in October, 1880. On May 31, 1881, the name of the post office was changed to Dillon. With the coming of the railroad Dillon began to grow. The 1890 population was 1,012 and increased to 1,530 in 1900. Between 1900 and 1920 the population doubled to 3,099. The period between 1890 and 1920 was a period of prosperity and one of the city's most significant growth eras. Many of the prominent downtown buildings date from this era. Dillon continued to grow through the 1920s and had a 1930 population of 4,023. The Depression Era took its toll on the city and by 1940 the population had dropped to 3,014, below that of 1920. Since 1940, Dillon has not changed significantly, but has shown slow, steady growth.



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The Dillon Post Office is located on the north corner of Idaho and Sebree streets, at the edge of the commercial district (streets platted 45 degrees to north/south). Land uses along Idaho Street to the northeast include the Carnegie Library (Romanesque Revival, 1902, stone) across the parking lot adjacent to the post office, and a frame church and bank building (modern, stone) on the opposite of the street. A park is located at the south corner of the Idaho/Sebree intersection (opposite the post office). Commercial uses are located across Sebree Street to the Southwest (two-brick), and the alley to the west and north.

The post office is included in a survey area that has been identified by the SHPO as a potential historic district. The post office has been identified in the survey as being a primary structure. The Carnegie Library, adjacent to the northeast, is listed in the National Historic Register. The commercial buildings to the southwest of the post office are identified as contributing or primary structures in the potential historic district.

LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DILLON  
MAIN POST OFFICE

The procurement and construction of the Dillon Post Office are reported in the The Dillon Tribune between 1931 and 1935. On March 6, 1931, it was reported that Dillon may get a \$100,000 post office building. The Post Office and Treasury departments had requested \$325,000 for new post offices in Montana as part of a \$5,240,000 national public building program. Other Montana cities listed were Deer Lodge (\$80,000), Glendive (\$95,000), and Great Falls (\$50,000).

No news of the post office surfaced until 1932. On June 9th, The Tribune reported that petitions were being circulated by local citizens in the effort to gain appropriations for a Dillon Post Office. Plans

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for the post office were mentioned in the Garner Relief Bill presently before Congress. It was felt by the citizens circulating the petition that unless local citizens show an interest, the post office would go to another city. The post office construction would provide needed employment for "scores of Dillon residents" and would have a positive economic benefit to the city. An article of September 22nd reported that Dillon was scheduled for a post office. According to a dispatch from Washington D.C., Dillon was named as a recipient city under the new relief program.

The outlook for a new post office was favorable in 1933, when on January 26th it was reported that a federal agent would soon visit the city to look over post office sites. According to Postmaster J.C. Faller he would arrive on February 1st. The February 2nd issue reported some controversy over the meeting in which J.E. Fitzgerald (federal site inspector) discussed sites, the post office proponents prevailed. According to Fitzgerald, eight sites had been offered for the \$90,000 building. One of the local citizens offered to put together a subscription list of \$100 per subscriber to purchase a site. Hopes were dashed when a July 27th article reported that a new 5-year lease had been signed on the existing post office. Construction of the new building was postponed indefinitely. On August 17th, The Tribune reported that a recently received letter indicated that Dillon was being considered by the Special Board for Public Works for inclusion in the public building program under the provision of the Industrial Recovery Act. On September 28th, Harry J. Andrus was named to succeed J.C. Faller as postmaster. As reported on November 23rd, the Rotary voted 19 to 5 to assert their approval of a new federal building to Dillon. There was hope that the Rotary action would revive the stalled project.

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Finally, on June 28, 1934, it was reported that a post office for Dillon was assured. A \$100,000 emergency appropriation had been made for the building. Senator B. K. Wheeler and Representative J. A. Monaghan had secured the appropriation as one of 626 projects nationwide. In the months of July and August bids for a post office site were again called and further local discussion took place. On September 30th, five lots owned by Mrs. E. L. Poindexter were purchased for the post office. Eleven sites had been offered. The Poindexter home, which had been constructed by Dr. E. H. Pickman, would be relocated to another site.

On May 9, 1935, The Tribune reported that work on the federal building was promised. The building drawing and specifications would be placed on the market for bid immediately. Bids were called on May 23rd. An article of June 27th enthusiastically reported "greatest boom in recent year". The construction trade had been steadily at work since the first of the year. "Old man Depression has taken a back seat." In July it was reported that the mining industry was reviving and was the best in years. James Leck of Minneapolis was selected as the contractor for the post office, according to a July 25th article.

An article of August 29th reported that ground for the new post office had been broken. Roger B. Mead of the Mead construction Company of Denver was supervising the work (apparently the first contract was not consummated). The laying of the cornerstone was reported on December 5th. Dr. Sheldon E. Davis, President of Montana State Normal College, gave the main address. Stores were closed and flags adorned the city's lamp posts. The high school band provided music. In his address, Dr. Davis stressed that the building is tangible evidence of the faith imposed by the federal government in the present and future stability of Dillon.

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On March 9, 1936, it was reported that "the beautiful new federal building" would be completed in the spring. An so it was. The Tribune reported the public opening on June 11th. The dream had finally become a reality. The "handsome structure is a credit to the city and is admired by numerous visitors." The building was described as having the appearance of a Georgian mansion with its colonial windows and entry terrace of russet colored tile. The article also stated that Dillon was fortunate to have been selected for a post office, and that none of the government services touches us so intimately as mail service. On June 25th, it was reported that the post office building had received its final inspection and had been accepted by the federal government.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Lutz, Meryl. "Terminus-Post Office at Track's End," Montana Postal Cacite, February 1975, pp.5-8.
2. The Dillon Tribune, various articles 1931-1936.
3. Floor Plans 1935, 1963.
4. Leavengood, David L. "historic Resources of Dillon, Montana (Partial Inventory: Historic and Architectural Properties)," August 1981.
5. Sanborn Map, August 1912, sheet 8.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.528 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 2	3 7 1 4 3 0	5 0 1 0 8 1 0 2 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 13-20, Block 2, original townsite.

The site is rectangular and contains 200 feet of frontage along Idaho Street, with a depth and frontage of 115 feet, along Sebree Street.

Site Size = 23,000 sq. ft.

### LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NA	NA	NA	NA
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NA	NA	NA	NA

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

H. J. "Jim" Kolva

ORGANIZATION

Institute for Urban and Local Studies

DATE

September 1985

STREET & NUMBER

W. 705 1st Avenue

TELEPHONE

(509) 458-6219

CITY OR TOWN

Spokane

STATE

Washington

99204

## 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_ NONE\_\_\_

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National  National  State  Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*James T. Cox*

TITLE

Director, Office of Real Estate

DATE

02/06/86

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*See Continuation Sheet for listing*

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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