

Pinehurst's Downtown Septuagenarian post Office sells its last stamp today. The historic post office opened in 1933 during the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt. Its closing is the result of a decision at the federal level to cut costs by closing mostly rural post offices in the face of multi-billion dollar losses. In the case of Pinehurst, the other village post office on Blake Boulevard is more than adequate to absorb the thousand or so box holders who find themselves displaced. There is a bright side. Koley Keel, Owner of the well-patronized Village Deli, says the post office did nothing to improve commerce for shopkeepers. "I don't feel we derived anything from the people it brought in here," says Keel. "They check their mail and they leave." Fewer people coming to the post office will make parking easier for customers stopping at local businesses. According to Keel the five-thousand square feet would be better utilized if it were occupied by a small grocery store. Then Downtown Pinehurst, says Keel, could again become an essential place for residents to visit on a regular basis. That very idea is being floated by Pinehurst Civic Group Members participating in a comprehensive study of ways to revitalize downtown. Among the best received suggestions was one advanced by Mary Ann Welsch, who suggested bringing in a market which would feature fresh, locally grown foods and locally made products. The professional group conducting the study will present its findings with a written report to the Pinehurst Council next month.