Winsted postmaster reverses decision, says petition OK

4/14/94

By JUNE PETERSON
Register Citizen Staff

WINSTED — The Winsted postmaster apologized Tuesday for asking Judy Pavlak not to petition in front of the post office.

In a letter dated April 12, Postmaster James R. St. Pierre wrote to Raymond and Judy Pavlak he was sorry because he found out he was "wrong to an extent."

"Our regulations have a very fine line that you were ok with. I could have asked you to leave if you were obstructing our customers but you were not. Your petition was not political and you were not selling anything so you were within your rights," St. Pierre wrote. St. Pierre could not be reached for comment Wednesday afternoon.

Judy Pavlak was circulating a petition March 26 urging the state to restore grant funding to local schools on the sidewalk of the Main Street post office.

She contacted community lawyer Charlene LaVoie after the incident, and LaVoie researched the issue. LaVoie wrote St. Pierre a letter telling him that his actions were unconstitutional, and Pavlak had a right to petition on the sidewalk.

LaVoie was satisfied with St. Pierre's response.

"It's clear that the postal service understands, that the First Amendment's rights of expression cannot be prohibited on the municipal sidewalk in front of the Winsted post office," LaVoie said.

Pavlak could not be reached for comment.