

Bancroft Post Office lead hand retires after 26 years



By **Mike Riley**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

It's the end of an era at the Bancroft Post Office. Brenda Medve, the lead hand or postmaster at the Bancroft Post Office is retiring from Canada Post after 35 years and seven months, 25 years and seven months spent in Bancroft. Angie Polmateer and the rest of her coworkers had a retirement party for her on June 30 to give her a big send-off, and many community members came by to wish her the best. Medve's co-worker Polmateer says that Medve was with Canada post for 35 years and 7 months and that 10 of those years was in Toronto, while balance of those years were at the Bancroft Post Office. Medve started part-time, went to full-time and eventually became the lead hand, which Polmateer says is kind of like the postmaster in Bancroft. "She's pretty much been the postmaster of the Bancroft Post Office for the last 26 years," she says. Medve's colleagues started planning her retirement party back in May, and Polmateer reveals that they'll have a tent with some snacks in the back parking lot of the post office from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. for the festivities. "All our customers can come and just say goodbye to her so she can have a minute to talk to them. And then I have a book for them to sign for memories for her, just to wish her well. I mean, she's been serving these people; she saw their children, she saw their grandchildren, she saw when they bought their first house and now, they're getting close to retirement. So, she's been through quite a bit at the Bancroft Post Office," she says. Polmateer also reveals that she got the Town of Bancroft to make up a certificate, signed by Mayor Paul Jenkins, to present to Medve for her many years of service. She's hoping that someone from the Town of Bancroft will be on hand to present it, but if not, she said she'll give it to Medve. "I believe she needs to be celebrated because a lot of people know her and she's going to be really missed," she says. On the day of Medve's retirement party, June 30, Medve told Bancroft This Week everything was going great, but she said it was a hard decision to leave. "When you've been working with a company for so many years and I love my job, I love my customers. I'm going to miss everybody. I've seen life," she says. Medve says her coworkers had all shown so much thanks for her service, including Polmateer, who made up storyboards detailing Medve's time at the post office. Medve's goal was if you have to be at work, always strive to be happy. "I wanted customers to want to come in and it got to the point that customers would come in just to say hi, they weren't getting anything, they're like "I just wanted to say hi," she says. Medve says that she'll be taking the summer to stay at home in Gilmour and do all the things she neglected to do because she was working so much. Especially in the last three years, she said she worked 12-to-15-hour days a lot because of volumes spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic. "I worked harder in my last three years than I did in the whole time I worked here, but we made it through so that was great," she says. As for what comes next, she's not sure, but she says she might end up working again, a couple of days a week. She said she might even travel a bit once the COVID-19 pandemic completely subsides. Medve says it's a new beginning and it took her a long time to make the decision to retire. "I was ready to go a couple of years ago but then COVID-19 hit. And I wanted to have a party. I couldn't picture, after all these years, just sitting in my yard and just waving to people. I wanted a party. And this was nice because the whole place, we had to wear masks and social distance until

two weeks ago. So, it's so nice having these last two weeks working with everybody without masks and being back to some normalcy,? she says. Mary Ann Ames is one of Medve's customers and has known her for the past 26 years. ?Yeah, she's been here a long time and she's been a fantastic mail lady. She'd go out of her way to do anything, let's put it that way,? she says. Brenda Shanick is another long-time customer of Medve, as she comes in to pay her rent and by now Medve knows the amount and where it goes. Shanick says that she always would tease Medve about the [Ottawa] Senators. ?Yeah, I'm really going to miss her,? she says. Dawn Newman, another coworker of Medve, says that she's known her for years, and that she's the reason she got the current postal run she has up in Bancroft. ?Originally, I was a spare driver for the Gilmour run. She let me know about this one and I came up. That was about 20 years ago,? she says. ?It's nice to know they're all so happy for me. And like I said, the Town of Bancroft, amazing people. Everybody's been so nice. It really makes your day.?