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RURAL MAIL BOX INDICATOR ASSEMBLY

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FIG. 1

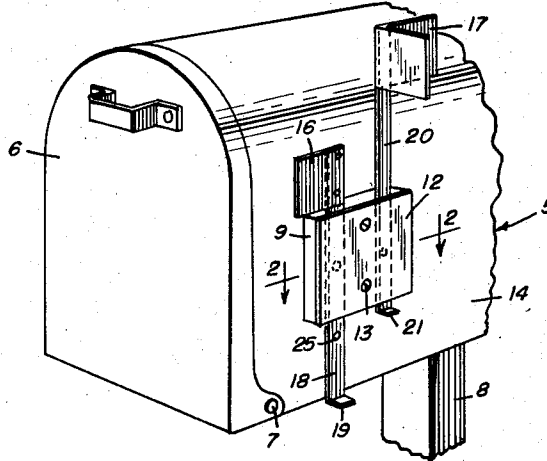


FIG. 2

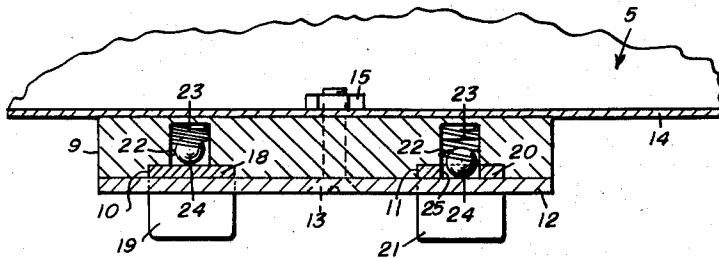
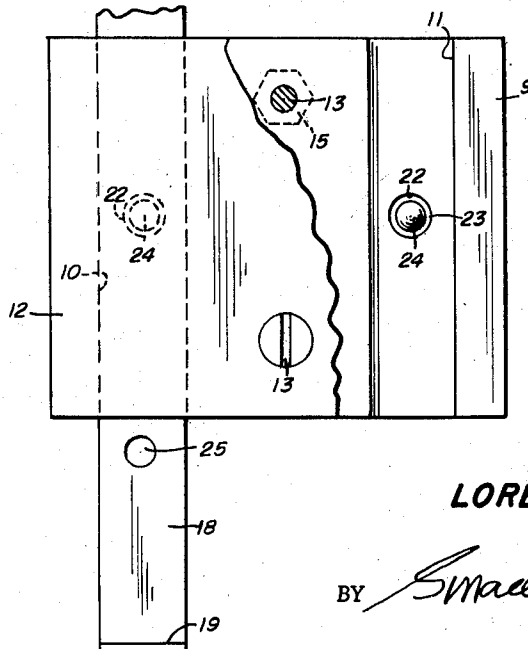


FIG. 3

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RURAL MAIL BOX INDICATOR ASSEMBLY

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1 Claim. (Cl. 232—34)

This invention relates to an indicator for rural mail boxes and the like and consists more particularly in new and useful improvements in an indicator assembly adapted to be secured to conventional rural mail boxes and including two independently shiftable signal flags, one disposed to indicate to the mail carrier the presence in the box of mail to be posted and the other disposed for ready visibility by the patron to indicate that mail has been left in the box by the postman.

Most rural mail boxes are normally provided with a metal flag device pivotally attached to the side of the box and adapted to be shifted to an erect position by the patron to indicate that mail has been placed in the box for posting. After the mail has been collected by the postman, he returns the flag to its initial position which, of course, indicates that he has collected the mail. However, with these conventional indicating systems, there is nothing to inform the patron whether or not mail has been left in the box by the postman and often an unnecessary trip is made to the mail box.

It is the primary object of this invention to provide a combined indicator assembly which may be easily attached to a conventional rural mail box and is designed to provide separate indicating flags or signals which are easily operable by the patron and the postman so that each can inform the other either of the presence in the box of mail to be collected or mail which has been delivered.

Another object of the invention is to provide a compact unitary assembly of the two flags in a single supporting housing, the operating ends of the flag bars being arranged in convenient proximity to facilitate ease of operation for both the mail carrier and the patron.

Still another object of the invention is to provide an assembly of this nature which is extremely simple in construction and which can be readily attached to a conventional mail box without requiring alterations thereof.

With the above and other objects in view which will appear as the description proceeds, the invention consists in the novel features herein set forth, illustrated in the accompanying drawings and more particularly pointed out in the appended claims.

Referring to the drawings in which numerals of like character designate similar parts throughout the several views:

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of a conventional rural mail box, partially broken away, showing my improved indicator assembly installed;

FIGURE 2 is an enlarged transverse sectional view taken on line 2—2 of FIGURE 1; and

FIGURE 3 is a front elevational view, partially broken away, showing the mounting plate and the means for slidably supporting the dual indicators.

In the drawings, 5 generally represents a conventional rural mail box having the usual access door hingedly connected at 7 and supported on a vertical post or the like 8. The indicator assembly of the present invention comprises a mounting block or plate 9 preferably composed of a solid aluminum block, as seen in FIG. 2 and provided on its forward face with two laterally spaced, parallel, vertical channels 10 and 11 which may be milled in the block. A closure plate 12 of similar material embraces the forward face of mounting block 9, overlying the channels 10 and 11 and is held in place by a pair of vertically spaced bolts 13 adapted to extend through the closure

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block and mounting block as well as the vertical wall 14 of the mail box 5, where conventional nuts 15 retain them in place. Thus, the mounting block and the closure plate jointly form a housing for attachment to a vertical wall of a rural mail box with bolts and nuts 13—15 serving the dual purpose of securing the closure plate 12 in place and securing the combined housing to the mail box wall.

As before stated, the indicator assembly of the present invention includes two independently shiftable signal flags and for the purposes of this description, they will be referred to as the "pick-up" flag and the "delivery" flag, shown respectively at 16 and 17 in FIG. 1. The "pick-up" flag 16 replaces the conventional signal flag found on most rural mail boxes and is mounted at the upper end of a staff or bar 18 slidably disposed in the channel 10 of mounting block 9. The lower end of the bar 18 is preferably bent angularly as at 19 to provide a readily accessible handle for manually shifting the bar 18 in the slot 10.

The "delivery" flag 17 as best seen in FIG. 1, is secured to the upper end of a second staff or bar 20 and is preferably formed in two integral sections, one disposed in a vertical plane parallel with the vertical wall of the mail box and the other directed at right angles thereto to provide visibility from any direction, as will later appear. The lower end of the bar 20 is also bent outwardly as at 21 to facilitate the manual shifting of the signal.

Preferably, the bars 18 and 20 are formed of stainless steel for rigidity and durability. Also, it may be desirable for the "delivery" flag 17 to be constructed in collapsible form to facilitate packaging.

In order to retain the respective indicator flags in vertically projected position, the preferred embodiment of the invention includes spring actuated ball assemblies which coact with the respective bars 18 and 20. As best seen in FIGS. 2 and 3, the mounting block 9 is recessed to provide wells 22 intermediate the ends of the channels 10 and 11, to receive coiled springs 23. At its outer end, each spring engages a ball 24 and normally urges it into engagement with the rear faces of the respective bars 18 and 20 which are provided at suitable points intermediate their ends, with openings 25 for receiving the balls 24. Thus, when either bar is elevated to a position where the opening 25 therein approaches the respective ball 24, the latter is forced into the opening to retain the bar in elevated position. By simply pulling downwardly on either handle 19 or 21 the respective ball 24 disengages the opening 25 and permits the bar to be retracted.

As seen in FIG. 1, this assembly is installed on a rural mail box with the "pick-up" flag 16 lying in a plane parallel with the supporting vertical wall 14 of the mail box so that when vertically projected, it is clearly visible to the postman for some distance to inform him that the patron has left mail in the box to be picked up. After removing the mail from the box the postman simply pulls downwardly on the handle 19, releasing the spring pressed ball 24 from the bar 18 and permitting its retraction to the position shown in FIG. 1.

The "delivery" flag 17 being angularly shaped as previously described, is clearly visible to the patron from any direction when vertically projected as in FIG. 1. Thus, if after removing mail left in the box for posting, the postman leaves mail for the patron, he projects the bar 20 vertically by means of the handle 21, until the spring pressed ball 24 engages the opening 25 in the bar 20, thereby retaining the signal in elevated position.

It will be apparent that the indicator assembly of the present invention is extremely simple in construction, easily installed without requiring alteration of the mail box and very simple to operate both by the postman and

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the ptaron. Preferably, the "pick-up" flag 16 is colored red and to distinguish therefrom, the "delivery" flag 17 is colored yellow.

From the foregoing it is believed that the invention may be readily understood by those skilled in the art without further description, it being borne in mind that numerous changes may be made in the details disclosed without departing from the spirit of the invention as set forth in the following claim:

I claim:

An indicator mounting assembly for attachment to rural mail boxes and the like, comprising a plane, solid mounting block, having at least one open ended channel extending vertically from top to bottom in its forward face, a plane closure plate overlying said channel in flush engagement with said forward face and forming with said mounting block and channel, a guideway for slidably re-

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ceiving the staff of a signal flag, common means for securing said mounting block to said mail box and for securing said closure plate to said mounting block, and means within said channel for retaining the staff of a signal flag in vertically projected position.

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