(text box: 1)BEFORE THE IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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| IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION FROM RESIDENTS OF SWAN VALLEY, IRWIN AND PALISADES REQUEST­ING EXTENDED AREA SERVICE (EAS) TO ALL OF BONNEVILLE COUNTY, AND THE TOWNS OF RIRIE, VICTOR AND DRIGGS. | )  )  )  )  )  ) | CASE NOS.  GNR-T-96-6                        GNR-T-97-3                        GNR-T-97-8 |
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| IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION FROM RESIDENTS OF GRAY’S LAKE, WAYAN AND FREEDOM REQUESTING INCLUSION IN THE U S WEST COMMUNICATIONS EASTERN IDAHO CALLING REGION.    IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION FROM RESIDENTS OF TETON COUNTY REQUEST­ING EXTENDED AREA SERVICE (EAS) TO THE GREATER IDAHO FALLS AREA(footnote: -6) | )  )  )  )  )  )  )  )  )  )  )  ) | NOTICE OF HEARINGS  NOTICE OF PETITION  ORDER NO.  27150 |

In these cases customers have petitioned the Commission for toll-free, extended area service (EAS) from their exchanges to other nearby exchanges in eastern Idaho.  In Case No.  GNR-T-96-6, residents of “Greater Swan Valley” have requested toll-free calling to the communities of Idaho Falls, Ririe, Victor, and Driggs.  Silver Star Telephone Company provides local exchange service to the “Greater Swan Valley” communities of Swan Valley, Irwin, and Palisades.  U S WEST Communications provides local exchange service to the communities of  Idaho Falls and Ririe; Teton Telecom Company provides local exchange service to the communities of Victor and Driggs.  In Case No. GNR-T-97-3, customers living in the Gray’s Lake, Wayan, and Freedom, Idaho areas have petitioned to be included in U S WEST eastern Idaho local calling region.(footnote: 1)  Those customers are located in the Wayan and Irwin exchanges and are served by Silver Star Telephone Company.

Finally, in Case No. GNR-T-97-8, customers located in or near the communities of Victor, Driggs, Tetonia, and Felt, have also petitioned the Commission for EAS to the greater Idaho Falls area.  These customers are located in the Driggs exchange and served by Teton Telecom.  As indicated above, some of the requests contained in the three petitions overlap.

In each of the three cases, the petitioners allege that there is a strong community-of-interest between their exchanges and the exchanges or areas they wish to call toll-free.  The petitions state that many customers call the requested areas for work, medical, government, school, and community needs.  In this Order, the Commission is scheduling these cases for hearing.

NOTICE OF HEARING

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that given the proximity of the exchanges involved in these cases and the similarity of the requested EAS or areas of service, the Commission on its own motion finds that it is appropriate and reasonable to consolidate these cases.  The Commission finds that the issues presented in these cases are related and the rights of the parties will not be prejudiced by consolidation.  IDAPA 31.01.01.247.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that Silver Star Telephone Company, U S WEST Communications, Teton Telecom Communications and Columbine Telephone Company, have already been designated as parties to this proceeding.(footnote: 2)  The Commission understands that the parties as well as the Staff have already begun their investigations to determine the community-of-interest, costs, and feasibility of the requests.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that persons desiring to intervene in this matter for the purpose of presenting evidence or cross-examining witnesses at hearing must file a Petition to Intervene with the Commission pursuant to this Commission’s Rules of Procedure 72 and 73, IDAPA 31.01.01.072 and -.073.  Persons intending to participate at the hearing must file a Petition to Intervene on or before October 1, 1997.  Persons desiring to present their views without parties’ rights of participation and cross-examination are not required to intervene and may present their comments without prior notification to the Commission or the parties.

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that the Commission will convene the technical hearing in these combined cases on TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1997 AT 2:30 P.M. AT THE TETON WEST MOTOR INN CONFERENCE ROOM, 476 N. MAIN, DRIGGS, IDAHO.  The purpose of this hearing will be to take the technical evidence of the Companies and the Staff concerning the costs (including any projected rate increase to fund the requests), the community-of-interest, and feasibility of the requests.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that the Commission will convene public hearings for the purpose of taking testimony from members of the public.  The first public hearing in Case No. GNR-T-97-8 will be on TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1997 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE TETON HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM, 481 N. MAIN, DRIGGS, IDAHO.  The second public hearing in Case Nos. GNR-T-96-6 and GNR-T-97-3 will be held on WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1997 AT 10:00 A.M. IN THE SWAN VALLEY AMERICAN LEGION HALL, SWAN VALLEY, IDAHO.  The purpose of the public hearings will be to receive evidence regarding the community-of-interest between the petitioning exchange customers and the requested calling areas.  In addition, the Commission invites testimony addressing the proposed rate increase (if any) that customers are willing to pay to obtain the extended local calling.  The parties are expected to provide a brief explanation of their respective positions at the start of the public hearings.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that the Commission has adopted the following discovery and testimony schedule in this case:

Deadline for prefile direct testimony of

the CompaniesOctober 24, 1997

Deadline for prefile direct testimony of the

Staff — to be received by all partiesNovember 14, 1997

Any rebuttal testimony will be presented at the technical hearing.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that there will be no discovery deadlines imposed in these consolidated proceedings.  The parties are directed to act in good faith in submitting and responding to discovery requests in accordance with the Commission’s Rules of Procedure, IDAPA 31.01.01.000 et seq.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that all hearings and prehearing conferences in this matter will be held in facilities meeting the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.  Persons needing the help of a sign language interpreter or other assistance of the kind that the Commission is obligated to provide under the Americans with Disabilities Act in order to participate in or to understand the testimony and argument at a public hearing may ask the Commission to provide a sign language interpreter or other assistance at the hearing.  The request for assistance must be received at least five (5) working days before the hearing by contacting the Commission Secretary at:

IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

PO BOX 83720

BOISE, IDAHO  83720-0074

(208) 334-0338  (TELEPHONE)

(208) 334-3151  (TEXT TELEPHONE)

(208) 334-3762  (FAX)

 YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that the Petitions in these cases are available for public inspection during regular business hours at the Commission offices.  The prepared testimony and exhibits must conform to the requirements of Rules 230-231 of the Commission’s Rules of Procedure, IDAPA 31.01.01.230-231.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that all proceedings in this matter will be conducted pursuant to the Commission's Rules of Procedure, IDAPA 31.01.01.000 et seq.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED  that the Commission has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to Title 61 of the Idaho Code.

O R D E R

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the prepared testimony and exhibits of all parties be served upon all other parties of record in accordance with the schedule set out above.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Case Nos. GNR-T-96-6, GNR-T-97-3 and GNR-T-97-8 be consolidated for hearing.

DONE by Order of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission at Boise, Idaho this                  day of September 1997.

                                                                                                                                      DENNIS S. HANSEN, PRESIDENT

                                                                                           RALPH NELSON, COMMISSIONER

MARSHA H. SMITH, COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:

Myrna J. Walters

Commission Secretary

bls/O-gnrt966.dh

**FOOTNOTES**

-6:

The case captions for GNR-T-96-6 and GNR-T-97-8 have been amended to reflect the scope of the respective EAS Petitions.

1:

In Order No. 26672 issued November 1, 1996, the Commission directed that U S WEST implement three regional calling areas, including the eastern Idaho region.  Customers in this Idaho calling region may make toll-free calls to the exchanges of American Falls, Bancroft, Blackfoot, Dayton, Downey, Firth, Franklin, Grace, Idaho Falls, Inkom, Lava Hot Springs, Louisville-Menan, McCammon, Montpelier, Pocatello, Preston, Rexburg, Rigby, Ririe, Riverside, Roberts, Shelley, Soda Springs, and Thatcher.

2:

In Order No. 27132 issued September 11, 1997, the Commission granted intervention in Case No. GNR-T-97-8 to Columbine Telephone Company.

**COMMENTS AND ANNOTATIONS**

Text Box 1:

**TEXT BOXES**

Office of the Secretary

Service Date

September 24, 1997