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

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| IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITIONS FOR EXTENDED AREA SERVICE (EAS) BETWEEN BURLEY, IDAHO AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES IN CASSIA COUNTY. | )  )  )  )  ) | CASE NO. GNR-T-96-9  NOTICE OF PETITION |

In February and March of 1995, the Commission received petitions from the Board of County Commissioners for Cassia County, as well as the Director of Financing and Operations for the Cassia County School Districts requesting toll-free calling among the exchanges of Burley (Cassia County), Idaho and surrounding communities in Cassia County.  Toll-free calling between  exchanges is generally provided via a service arrangement known as extended area service (EAS).  Approximately 75% of Idaho’s exchanges have some EAS(footnote: 1) calling to other exchanges.  Local exchange service in Cassia County is provided by Albion Telephone Company, U S WEST Communications, and Project Mutual Telephone Cooperative Association, Inc.  Exchanges in Cassia County include the following: Raft River, Malta, Burley, Murtaugh, Albion, Oakley, and Elba.  Upon its own motion, the Commission initiates this proceeding to examine the reasonableness of establishing EAS routes between these exchanges within Cassia County.

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that the petitions generally assert that members of different communities within Cassia County call other residents within the county for work and community needs. It further states that many towns within Cassia County do not have toll-free calling access to Burley where government offices, medical assistance, schooling, businesses, and other offices are located. The petitions maintain that it is important for residents to be able to call their county officials without incurring a toll charge.  The petitions further claim that EAS calling will make it easier to gain access to the telecommunications information highway, e.g., by obtaining Internet access.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that this proceeding has been initiated on the Commission’s own Motion to consider the reasonableness of providing EAS between Burley  and surrounding communities in Cassia County.  Further scheduling will be accomplished at a later time.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that U S WEST, Albion Telephone Company of Idaho, and Project Mutual Telephone Cooperative Association, Inc. are designated as parties to this case.  The Commission does not regulate services provided by Project Mutual.  See Idaho Code § 61-104.  However, the Petitioners’ request for EAS does affect the service area of Project Mutual, which is therefore, also designated as a party to this case.

DATED at Boise, Idaho this day of August 1996.

Myrna J. Walters

Commission Secretary

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**FOOTNOTES**

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   1“Toll-free” EAS is something of a misnomer because the costs associated with converting a former long-distance toll route to a toll-free EAS route are usually recovered from the affected customers by increasing their rates for local service.

**COMMENTS AND ANNOTATIONS**

Text Box 1:

**TEXT BOXES**

Office of the Secretary

Service Date

August 20, 1996