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

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| IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF CUSTOMERS OF THE FREMONT TELCOM COMPANY REQUEST­ING EXTENDED AREA SERVICE (EAS) TO THE U S WEST EASTERN IDAHO CALLING REGION. | )  )  )  )  )  ) | CASE NO.  GNR-T-97-14    NOTICE OF  TECHNICAL HEARING  ORDER NO.  27577 |
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On July 24, 1997, the Commission issued a Notice of Petition that it had received a petition from approximately 1,400 customers of the Fremont Telcom Telephone Company requesting toll-free, extended area service (EAS) between Fremont County and U S WEST Communications’ eastern Idaho calling region.  Fremont serves approximately 5,800 customers in the exchanges of Ashton, Island Park and St. Anthony.  The Petition stated that eastern Idaho is a single economic area and argued that failure to authorize EAS would isolate Fremont County and hinder economic development.  The Petition also contended that granting EAS will have a positive impact on the school district, city and county governments, law enforcement, health care, and commerce.

On May 8, 1998, Fremont Telcom, U S WEST and the Commission Staff filed a Stipulation and Settlement agreement regarding the EAS petition.  The parties settled many of the issues typically raised in EAS cases and recommended the Commission grant EAS.

On May 12, 1998, the Commission issued a Notice of Settlement, Notice of Intervention Deadline and Notice of Hearing, which established a procedural schedule, including a time for a  public hearing, but did not provide the date and time for a technical hearing.  This Notice establishes a technical hearing in this matter on Thursday, June 25, 1998 in Boise, Idaho.

Commission Rule of Procedure 241 requires that a notice of hearing be served at least fourteen (14) days before the time set for hearing, “unless the Commission finds by order that the public necessity requires the hearing to be held earlier.”  IDAPA 31.01.01.241.01.  We find that the public necessity does require a slightly shorter notice period in this case.  The parties have only recently indicated that June 25, 1998 is available to them for a technical hearing, and it also is compatible with the Commission’s schedule and calendar.  Notice of the public hearing was adequately provided and, in fact, the public hearing has already been convened.  As the technical hearing is primarily for Staff and the parties to provide technical evidence, and the parties have indicated that June 25, 1998 is an appropriate date for the technical hearing, we find that the public necessity requires less than fourteen (14) days notice before the technical hearing.

NOTICE OF TECHNICAL HEARING

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that the Commission will convene a technical hearing for the purpose of taking technical evidence from Staff and the parties.  The hearing will convene on THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 1998, AT 9:30 A.M. IN THE COMMISSION HEARING ROOM, 472 WEST WASHINGTON, BOISE, IDAHO.  The parties are expected to provide supportive evidence regarding the Stipulation and EAS petition. The Commission also invites testimony from interested members of the public regarding the community-of-interest between the three Fremont exchanges and the eastern Idaho calling area as well as the proposed rate increases.

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 petition, the Stipulation and Settlement agreement, and the supporting prefiled testimony and exhibits are available for public inspection during regular business hours at the Commission offices.

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 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 Commission will convene a technical hearing in this case on Thursday, June 25, 1998.

On a finding that the public necessity so requires, IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Notice of Hearing for the technical hearing may be served less than fourteen (14) days before the date of the technical hearing.

DONE by Order of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission at Boise, Idaho this                  day of  June 1998.

                                                                                                                                      DENNIS S. HANSEN, PRESIDENT

                                                                                           RALPH NELSON, COMMISSIONER

MARSHA H. SMITH, COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:

Rebecca Smith-Pitman

Assistant Commission Secretary

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**COMMENTS AND ANNOTATIONS**

Text Box 1:

**TEXT BOXES**

Office of the Secretary

Service Date

June 10, 1998