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

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| IN THE MATTER OF GTE NORTHWEST INCORPORATED’S TARIFF ADVICE NO. 98-10 TO PROVIDE TWO NEW EXTENDED CALLING AREAS FOR THE TENSED/ BLUEBELL AND EVERGREEN EXCHANGES. | )))))) | CASE NO.  GTE-T-98-3ORDER NO.  27661 |

On April 28, 1998, GTE Northwest Incorporated filed Tariff Advice 98-10 requesting approval to extend the local calling area for the Evergreen Exchange (Farmington, Idaho) and the Tensed/Bluebell exchange (Tensed, Idaho) into the towns of Potlatch, Plummer/Worley, and St. Maries, Idaho.  Both the Evergreen and Tensed/Bluebell exchanges are in the Spokane LATA, but the towns of Tensed (Bluebell exchange) and Farmington (Evergreen exchange) are on the Idaho side of the Idaho/Washington border.  The expanded calling area would be available to customers selecting the Community Plus calling plan.  GTE proposed an effective date of August 24, 1998 for its Tariff Advice 98-10, which was assigned Case No. GTE-T-98-3.

On June 18, 1998, the Commission upon determining that the public interest did not require a formal hearing in this matter, issued a Notice of Modified Procedure and Order No. 27593 to process this filing under modified procedure. See IDAPA 31.01.01.201-04.  The Notice established a 21-day comment period, which ended July 9, 1998.

Staff filed comments in support of the proposed extended area routes. Staff indicated that for the past year, Staff has worked with GTE on an equitable calling plan for the communities of Tensed, DeSmit and Farmington.  Staff reviewed the cost data submitted by GTE and found the proposed calling route adjustments to be revenue neutral to GTE and beneficial to the customers within the affected communities.  Staff stated its belief that GTE adequately addressed the needs of its customers in these communities by its proposed tariff advice.

Staff also received a letter in support of the extended calling region and a petition with 41 signatures supporting the new optional calling plan.  No comments objecting to the proposed optional calling plan were filed.

DISCUSSION

GTE’s tariff advice enlarges the local calling area for its customers that select the Community Plus calling plan.  The current and proposed optional calling areas are as follows:

Current Calling Areas    Proposed Calling Areas

EvergreenEvergreenEvergreen

(Farmington, ID)Farmington, WAFarmington, WA

Tensed/BluebellTensed/Bluebell

   Rock CreekRock Creek

Plummer/Worley

Potlatch

St. Maries

Tensed/BluebellTensed/BluebellTensed/Bluebell

Tensed, IDTekoa, WATekoa, WA

DeSmit, IDEvergreenEvergreen

Rock CreekRock Creek

Plummer/Worley

Potlatch

St. Maries

 Customers choosing the expanded Community Plus calling plan will see a rate increase over existing Community Plus rates. However, this is only one of four optional calling plans offered to GTE customers. The following rate increase is for unlimited usage for GTE’s Community Plus calling plan customers:

Current Monthly Rate     EAS AdderNew Monthly Rate

Evergreen and

Tensed/Bluebell

Residential (1 line)  $ 11.25$  6.76        $  18.01

Business (1 line)         22.00                       13.52               35.52

Business (Multi-line)       25.00  13.52              38.52

Central Office Located         19.00  13.25    32.52

Trunk

Plummer-Worley

Residential (1 line)  $ 16.20 $ 1.94     $  18.14

Business (1 line)          38.30    3.87       42.17

Business (Multi-line)     43.00    3.87                46.87

Central Office Located         37.00    3.87             40.87

Trunk

Potlatch

Residential  $ 15.25   $   .39            $ 15.64

Business (1 line)       36.00        .77      36.77

Business (Multi-line)         39.00        .77      39.77

Central Office Located         33.00        .77      33.77

Trunk

St. Maries

Residential $ 12.75   $   .29            $ 13.04

Business (1 line)        27.00        .58           27.58

Business (Multi-line)        30.00        .58      30.58

Central Office Located        24.00        .58      24.58

Trunk

GTE is also proposing to add the new calling areas to its Measured Rate Local Calling Plan.  However, neither the basic monthly rates nor the per minute charges will increase, GTE will simply add the new calling areas to its designated zone calling areas.

O R D E R

We find that GTE’s Tariff Advice 98-10 is a reasonable and appropriate adjustment to the local calling area for customers in the Evergreen and Tensed/Bluebell exchanges that select the Community Plus calling plan. The local calling area for these customers that live in Idaho has been mostly to Washington communities. The changes proposed by GTE, which are supported by Staff, will create more choices for customers, and increase access to other Idaho communities by these customers. We find the proposed changes and rates to be fair, reasonable and in the public interest, and therefore approve GTE’s Tariff Advice 98-10. GTE should implement the changes in Tariff Advice 98-10, effective August 24, 1998.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that GTE Tariff Advice 98-10 to implement changes to the calling areas in the Evergreen and Tensed/Bluebell exchanges is approved, effective August 24, 1998.

THIS IS A FINAL ORDER.  Any person interested in this Order may petition for reconsideration within twenty-one (21) days of the service date of this Order.  Within seven (7) days after any person has petitioned for reconsideration, any other person may cross-petition for reconsideration.  See Idaho Code § 61-626.

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

                                                                                                                                       DENNIS S. HANSEN, PRESIDENT

                                                                                            RALPH NELSON, COMMISSIONER

MARSHA H. SMITH, COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:

Myrna J. Walters

Commission Secretary

vld/O:GTE-T-98-3.ws2

**COMMENTS AND ANNOTATIONS**

Text Box 1:

**TEXT BOXES**

Office of the Secretary

Service Date

July 30, 1998