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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 EAS ROUTES FOR THE TENSED/BLUEBELL AND EVERGREEN EXCHANGES. | )))))) | CASE NO.  GTE-T-98-3COMMENTS OF THECOMMISSION STAFF |

COMES NOW the Staff of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission, by and through its Attorney of record, Weldon Stutzman, Deputy Attorney General, and submits the following comments for the Commission’s consideration in Case No. GTE-T-98-3.

BACKGROUND

On April 28, 1998, GTE Northwest Incorporated (GTE) filed Tariff Advice No. 98-10 requesting approval to provide two-way EAS routes from the Evergreen Exchange (Farmington, Idaho) and the Tensed/Bluebell Exchange (Tensed, Idaho) into the towns of Potlatch, Plummer/Worley, and St. Maries.  Both communities of Evergreen and Tensed are in the Spokane LATA and on the Idaho side of the Washington/Idaho borders.  The current local calling areas are into Washington.

On June 18, 1998, the Commission determined that the public interest may not require a formal hearing in this matter and issued Order No. 27593 to proceed under Modified Procedure pursuant to Rules 201 through 204 of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission’s Rules of Procedure, IDAPA 31.01.01.201 through .204.

DISCUSSION

Staff received a petition from the Tensed/Bluebell customers with 116 signatures requesting a local calling plan, which resulted in Staff contacting GTE in July 1997.  GTE agreed to investigate the feasibility of a local calling plan for the Tensed and Farmington communities.  GTE began a calling data study and cost analysis and found a reasonable community of interest was present for the Tensed/Bluebell customers’ calling into the St. Maries, Potlatch and Plummer/Worley exchanges.  GTE proposed the following calling plans:

Current ExchangesCurrent Calling AreasProposed Calling Areas

EvergreenEvergreenEvergreen

(Farmington, ID)Farmington, WAFarmington, WA

Tensed/BluebellTensed/Bluebell

Rock CreekRock Creek

Plummer/Worley

Potlatch

St. Maries

Tensed/BluebellTensed/BluebellTensed/Bluebell

(Tensed, ID)Tekoa, WATekoa, WA

(DeSmit, ID)EvergreenEvergreen

Rock CreekRock Creek

Plummer/Worley

Potlatch

St. Maries

GTE proposed the following rate design for its customers’ on GTE’s Community Plus calling plan.  This calling plan allows GTE’s customers to place toll-free calls into the communities within the new calling areas.  The following rate design is revenue neutral to GTE.  The EAS adder will be required of all GTE Community Plus Calling Plan customers within the proposed calling plan areas.  The EAS adder will be in addition to the pending rate increase that all GTE customers will experience as a result of its pending rate rebalancing case (Case No. GTE-T-98-2) that is currently before the Commission.

COMMUNITY PLUS CALLING PLAN

    Current       New

Monthly RateEAS AdderMonthly Rate

Evergreen and

Tensed/Bluebell

Residential (1 line)$ 11.25$  6.76$ 18.01

Business (1 line)22.0013.5235.52

Business (Multi-line)25.0013.5238.52

Central Office Located Trunk19.0013.5232.52

Plummer-Worley

Residential (1 line)$ 16.20$  1.94$ 18.14

Business (1 line)38.303.8742.17

Business (Multi-line)43.003.8746.87

Central Office Located Trunk37.003.8740.87

Potlatch

Residential$ 15.25$   .39$ 15.64

Business (1 line)36.00.7736.77

Business (Multi-line)39.00.7739.77

Central Office Located Trunk33.00.7733.77

St. Maries

Residential$ 12.75$   .29$ 13.04

Business (1 line)27.00.5827.58

Business (Multi-line)30.00.5830.58

Central Office Located Trunk24.00.5824.58

Staff has reviewed GTE’s filing and believes that it is appropriate and meets the needs of its customers.  Staff commends the Company’s response to its customers’ request for an optional local calling plan that will afford GTE customers the ability to place local calls into the state in which they reside.  Staff supports the proposed optional local calling plan that GTE has submitted.

Respectfully submitted this                day of July 1998.

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Weldon Stutzman

Deputy Attorney General

Technical Staff:   Carolee Hall

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