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## **IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

**For Immediate Release**

**Case No. GNR-T-04-1 and INL-T-04-1**

**March 4, 2004**

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**Website: [www.puc.state.id.us](http://www.puc.state.id.us)**

### **Telephone companies seek delays in number portability**

Boise – An association representing 16 rural Idaho telephone companies is asking the Idaho Public Utilities Commission to grant a six-month delay to implement number portability in their respective service areas.

Number portability allows wireline customers to switch to wireless phones without changing numbers. Wireless customers switching to another wireless company would also be able to retain their number.

The Federal Communications Commission ordered that all local exchange telephone companies have number portability in place by May 24. However, the FCC also said local exchange carriers with fewer than 2 percent of the nation's subscriber lines can petition their state commissions for a six-month suspension.

The Idaho companies asking for the extension include Albion Telephone Company, Cambridge Telephone Company, Filer Mutual Telephone Company, Custer Telephone Cooperative, Farmers Mutual Telephone Company, Filer Mutual Telephone Company, Midvale Telephone Company, Mud Lake Telephone Cooperative Association, Project Mutual Telephone Cooperative Association, Direct Communications – Rockland, Rural Telephone Company, Silver Star Telephone Company, Columbine Telephone Company, Oregon-Idaho Utilities, Rural Network Services, Inc., CTC Telephone, Fretel Communications and Fremont Telecom.

Inland Telephone Company, with customers in rural areas northeast of Lewiston, filed a separate petition, also seeking a six-month extension.

The member companies of the Idaho Telephone Association say they are pursuing an economically and technically feasible way to provide number portability, but that a system upgrade is required. The companies claim that waiting until the technology is complete will avoid significant adverse economic impact on their customers.

Inland says the cost to upgrade its switch will be about \$400,000. It has not yet received a request for number portability.

All the companies say they will have number portability in place no later than Nov. 24.

The commission will take written comment on the Idaho Telephone Association petition through March 12 and on the Inland Telephone petition through March 16.

Persons wishing to submit comments can do so via e-mail by accessing the commission's homepage at [www.puc.state.id.us](http://www.puc.state.id.us) and clicking on "Comments & Questions." Fill in the case number (GNR-T-04-1 for Idaho Telephone Association and INL-T-04-1 for Inland Telephone Company) and enter your comments. Comments can also be mailed to P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0074 or faxed to (208) 334-3762.

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