



IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Case No. QWE-T-03-10, Order No. 29218

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Qwest seeks to close Boise, Pocatello payment centers

BOISE – Qwest Corporation is seeking authority to close its customer payment centers in Boise and Pocatello. Qwest maintains that continued operation of the payment centers is not cost-effective and that customers have plenty of other options for paying bills.

If the Idaho Public Utilities Commission approves Qwest's request, the company hopes to have the centers at 999 Main Street in Boise and at 455 W. Lewis in Pocatello closed by the end of July. The commission is taking comments through May 7 from those who might be impacted by closing the centers.

Qwest maintains that operating the centers costs more than \$211,000 per year, not including the cost of renting space and utilities. Qwest maintains that the average costs of processing a payment through the Pocatello and Boise centers are \$2.27 and \$3 respectively. That compares to a cost of 11 cents of processing a payment through the mail. The company estimates that use of the two payment centers has declined 38 percent in recent years from 112,820 payments processed in 1996 to 70,126 in 2002. Many of the customers who use the payment centers are those who prefer to pay in cash.

The company would continue to operate its payment agent locations in both cities. Those are non-Qwest businesses that agree to receive Qwest payments. Boise currently has eight such locations with a ninth being negotiated and Pocatello has three.

According to the company, 84 percent of its customers make their payments by mail. Others may use the payment agent locations or arrange with Qwest to have automatic withdrawals from their checking account or pay by credit or debit card. Customers can also call a Qwest billing customer and pay from their checking account by providing a check routing number.

Any person desiring to state a position regarding Qwest's request may file a written comment in support or opposition with the commission by no later than May 7. Comments can be filed electronically by accessing the commission's Web site at www.puc.state.id.us. Click on the "Comments and Questions" icon, complete the comment form and include the case number, which is QWE-T-03-10. Comments can also be mailed to P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID, 83720-0074, or faxed to 208-334-3762.

Copies of Qwest's application are available on the commission's Web site. Click on "File Room," then on "Telecommunications Cases." Scroll to the bottom for Case No. QWE-T-03-10.