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

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| IN THE MATTER OF THE JOINT PETITION OF U S WEST COMMUNICATIONS, INC. AND RURAL TELEPHONE COMPANY FOR AMENDMENT TO THEIR RESPECTIVE CERTIFICATES OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY. | )  )  )  )  )  )  ) | CASE NO. USW-T-97-4  RUR-T-97-1  ORDER NO.  26828 |

On January 17, 1997, a Joint Petition for Amendment of Certificated Service Area Boundaries was filed by U S WEST Communications, Inc. and Rural Telephone Company.  According to the Petition, U S WEST’s certificated service area includes the Mountain Home exchange, a portion of which is adjacent to the Tipanuk exchange operated by Rural.  The Tipanuk exchange currently has 40 customers and is situated northwest of Mountain Home and adjacent to the northern portion of U S WEST’s Mountain Home exchange.

The petitioners desire to adjust the boundary between the Tipanuk and Mountain Home exchanges to add approximately 30 square miles to Rural’s Tipanuk exchange and exclude that area from U S WEST’s Mountain Home exchange.  Only one residential customer currently receives service from U S WEST in the area.  The Petition states that U S WEST will continue to serve this customer until such time as the customer elects to obtain service from Rural.  According to the Petition, Rural has received six requests for residential service in the identified area.  The Petition alleges that, because of the location of U S WEST’s and Rural’s existing facilities, Rural is best situated to provide service to the area and to respond to future requests for service.

On January 28, 1997, the Commission issued a Notice of Modified Procedure to process the Petition and establish a comment period.  Only the Commission Staff filed comments.  Staff noted that the area is sparsely populated, that Rural has secured all rights-of-way and easements required to serve the area, and that Rural is ready to begin construction of the lines required to serve the area.  According to Staff, the requested transfer of territory to Rural does not affect any other local exchange carrier and will not injure or interfere with the operation of any line, plant or system of any other public utility.  Staff stated its belief that the public convenience and necessity would be well-served by the transfer.

After review of the record in this case, we find that the public convenience and necessity will benefit from the transfer of the identified area from U S WEST to Rural.  Rural appears better situated to serve the area than U S WEST, and Rural has already received six requests for service.  At the same time, the only customer currently in the area will continue to receive service from U S WEST until the customer prefers to switch to Rural.  On the record created, we conclude that the Joint Petition of U S WEST and Rural should be approved

O R D E R

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the Joint Petition for Amendment of Certificated Service Area Boundaries filed by U S WEST and Rural is approved.  The parties shall provide service area maps to the Commission reflecting the transfer of the portion of U S WEST’s Mountain Home exchange to Rural.  U S WEST will continue to provide service to its sole customer in the area unless and until such time that the customer requests service from Rural.

THIS IS A FINAL ORDER.  Any person interested in this Order (or in issues finally decided by this Order) or in interlocutory Orders previously issued in this Case Nos. USW-T-97-4 and RUR-T-97-1  may petition for reconsideration within twenty-one (21) days of the service date of this Order with regard to any matter decided in this Order or in interlocutory Orders previously issued in this Case Nos. USW-T-97-4 and RUR-T-97-1 .  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 March 1997.

                                                                                                                                      RALPH NELSON, PRESIDENT

                                                                                           MARSHA H. SMITH, COMMISSIONER

DENNIS S. HANSEN, COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:

Myrna J. Walters

Commission Secretary

Vld/O:USW-T-97-4.ws

**COMMENTS AND ANNOTATIONS**

Text Box 1:

**TEXT BOXES**

Office of the Secretary

Service Date

March 5, 1997