BEFORE THE IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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| IN THE MATTER OF THE INVESTIGATION OF U S WEST COMMUNICATIONS, INC.’S SERVICE IN THE NORTH SHOSHONE, IDAHO AREA. | )  )  )  )  )  )  ) | CASE NO. USW-S-95-7  NOTICE OF INVESTIGATION  ORDER NO.  26187 |

On September 18, 1995, the Commission received a Petition with approximately 47 signatures of people residing in and around the north Shoshone, Idaho area.  The petitioners request that the Commission examine whether U S WEST Communications, Inc. (U S WEST) is providing adequate backup telephone service when the area experiences power outages.  Petitioners contend the telephones are dead and may not be operable for a period of time whenever there is a power outage in the area.

Apparently petitioners and the Commission Staff have attempted to resolve the problem informally with U S WEST.  The north Shoshone area is served by a remote terminal that is powered by electricity supplied by Idaho Power Company.  In the event of a power outage, backup batteries are available in the terminal to supply the necessary power until electrical service is restored.  Staff was informed the batteries are operable for only four hours following a power outage.  If the outage lasts longer than four hours, the batteries lose their charge and telephone service is lost.

Based upon the Petition, the Commission on its own Motion initiates this investigation into U S WEST’s ability to provide telephone service in the north Shoshone area when power outages occur.  Idaho Code § 61-302 requires U S WEST to provide telephone service and facilities that are adequate, efficient, just and reasonable.  We find that the issues raised in the petition warrant examination.  U S WEST shall provide written responses to the following questions no later than fourteen days from the date of this Order:

(1) When a power outage is experienced in the north Shoshone area, is telephone service terminated?  If so, what causes the termination of telephone service?

(2)  If telephone service is terminated due to a power outage, what mechanism or procedure does U S WEST have in place to be notified of that event?  Describe the procedures followed to restore service.

(3)  How long is the battery power source available to continue telephone service in the event of a power outage?  How many times and under what circumstances has the battery supply proved to be inadequate during power outages in this area during the past two years?

(4)  In the event a power outage lasts less than four hours, is telephone service automatically returned to the normal energy supply, or do the batteries continue to provide the power?

O R D E R

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that an investigation be initiated to examine the provision of telephone service by U S WEST in the north Shoshone area when there is a power outage.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that U S WEST file written responses to the questions posited in this Order no later than fourteen (14) days from the date of this Order.

DONE by Order of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission at Boise, Idaho this                  day of  October 1995.

RALPH NELSON, PRESIDENT

MARSHA H. SMITH, COMMISSIONER

DENNIS S. HANSEN, COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:

Myrna J. Walters

Commission Secretary

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