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

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| IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF U S WEST COMMUNICATIONS, INC.  FOR AUTHORITY TO INCREASE ITS RATES AND CHARGES FOR REGULATED TITLE 61 SERVICES. | )))))))) | CASE NO. USW-S-96-5NOTICE OF HEARING           ORDER NO.  26626 |

On August 7, 1996, the Commission issued its Notice of Application concerning U S WEST Communications’ request for a general rate increase for its Title 61 services.  Title 61 services are generally comprised of basic local exchange services provided to all residential and business customers with five or fewer telephone lines.  In its Notice of Application, the Commission specified a deadline for intervention and scheduled the prehearing conference in this matter for September 18, 1996.  The purpose of the prehearing conference was to discuss a hearing schedule and to address other preliminary matters.

PREHEARING CONFERENCE

The following parties entered appearances at the prehearing conference: U S WEST, the Commission Staff, the Idaho Cable Telecommunications Association, Idaho Consumer Affairs, AT&T Communications, MCI, Idaho Citizens Coalition, and the Idaho Telephone Association.  The following parties were not in attendance: Century Telephone of Idaho and TDS Telecom, Northwest Pay Telephone Association, American Association of Retired Persons, GTE Northwest, Inc. and Mr. David Hoffman.  The parties appearing at the prehearing conference proposed an extensive discovery and prefiled testimony schedule in this matter.

Pursuant to Idaho Code § 61-622, requests for general rate increases must be decided and an Order issued no later than 30 days plus five months following the proposed effective date for the rate increase.   The Company’s requested rate increase was proposed to be effective on September 1, 1996.  In Order No. 26552 issued August 7, 1996, the Commission suspended the rates contained in this Application for a period of 30 days plus 5 months from September 1, 1996, or until such time as the Commission issued its Order accepting, rejecting, or modifying the proposed rates.

Idaho Code § 61-622 also provides that for good cause on the record, the Commission may grant an additional sixty days to consider the rate increase.  By letter dated September 24, 1996, counsel for U S WEST consented to a suspension of the rates for an additional sixty days so that the Commission might consider post hearing briefs.  Based upon the consent of the applicant and the other parties, the Commission finds that there is good cause on the record to authorize a suspension of the rates contained in the Company’s Application for an additional period of sixty days, or for a period not to exceed May 1, 1997.

NOTICE OF HEARING

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that the Commission will convene a hearing on this matter on MONDAY, JANUARY 13, 1997, AT 9:30 A.M., AT THE COMMISSION HEARING ROOM LOCATED AT 472 WEST WASHINGTON STREET, BOISE, IDAHO 83702, (208) 334-0300.  The purpose of the hearing will be to take the evidence of the parties in this case.  The Commission will issue a Notice of Public Hearings for the purpose of obtaining public comment in this matter at a later date.

Based upon the agreement of the parties, the Commission adopts the following procedural schedule in this matter.

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| October 15, 1996November 19, 1996December 10, 1996December 23, 1996  | Deadline for the submission of Staff and Intervenor discovery.  (14 day answer)Staff and Intervenor prefile direct testimony.Deadline for U S WEST rebuttal.Deadline for Staff & Intervenor Rebuttal (in hand to U S WEST) |

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| --- | --- |
| December 30, 1996January 7, 1997January 13-17, 1997February 26, 1997March 12, 1997May 1, 1997  | Deadline for U S WEST to serve supplemental discovery, if necessary (in hand to receiving party).Deadline for answering supplemental discovery (in hand)Technical hearing in BoiseSimultaneous filings of initial post hearing briefsSimultaneous filing for responsive briefs Deadline for issuance of Order |

The parties agreed to a 14-day turn around for discovery except for those discovery dates specifically outlined above.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that the prepared testimony and exhibits of all parties must be served upon the Commission and all other parties of record by the dates specified above.  The prepared testimony and exhibits must conform to the requirements of Rules 266 through 267 of the Commission's Rules of Procedure, IDAPA 31.01.01.266-.267.  The exhibit numbers assigned to each party are contained in the Notice of Parties issued September 24, 1996.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that to facilitate preparation of the reporter’s transcript in a computer-searchable format, the parties prefiling testimony in this case are requested to submit such testimony on a diskette in WordPerfect (5.1 to 7.0) format as well as a hard copy.  Attached to the Notice of Parties, the Commission Secretary forward to the parties a testimony “template” for the preparation of prefiled testimony.  This format is in accordance with Idaho Appellate Rules 24 & 26 which will become effective October 1, 1996 and Commission Rule 231.01.  Questions concerning the format of the testimony may be directed to the Commission Secretary.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that all hearings and prehearing conferences in this matter will be held in facilities meeting the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.  Persons needing the help of a sign language interpreter or other assistance of the kind that the Commission is obligated to provide under the Americans with Disabilities Act in order to participate in or to understand the testimony and argument at a public hearing may ask the Commission to provide a sign language interpreter or other assistance at the hearing.  The request for assistance must be received at least five (5) working days before the hearing by contacting the Commission Secretary at:

IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

PO BOX 83720

BOISE, IDAHO  83720-0074

(208) 334-0338  (TELEPHONE)

(208) 334-3151  (TEXT TELEPHONE)

(208) 334-3762  (FAX)

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that the Application together with supporting workpapers, testimonies and exhibits, have been filed with the Commission and are available for public inspection during regular business hours at the Commission offices.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that all proceedings in this case will be held pursuant to the Commission's jurisdiction under Idaho Code §§  61-307, 61-507, 61-622, 61-622A and that the Commission may enter any final Order consistent with its authority under Title 61.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that all proceedings in this matter will be conducted pursuant to the Commission's Rules of Procedure, IDAPA 31.01.01.000 et seq.

O R D E R

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the parties adhere to the hearing schedule set out in the body of this Order.

DONE by Order of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission at Boise, Idaho this                  day of September 1996.

                                                                                                                                       RALPH NELSON, PRESIDENT

                                                                                            MARSHA H. SMITH, COMMISSIONER

DENNIS S. HANSEN, COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:

Myrna J. Walters

Commission Secretary

vld/O:USW-S-96-5.dh2

**COMMENTS AND ANNOTATIONS**

Text Box 1:

**TEXT BOXES**

Office of the Secretary

Service Date

September 27, 1996