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

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| IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITIONS FROM CITIZENS IN PRESTON, IDAHO AND MONT­PELIER, IDAHO REQUESTING EXTENDED AREA SERVICE (EAS) BETWEEN THEIR COMMUNITIES AND POCATELLO AND IDAHO FALLS. | )  )  )  )  )  ) | CASE NO. USW-T-96-13  NOTICE OF PETITION  NOTICE OF HEARING  ORDER NO.  26663 |

During the past several weeks the Commission has received numerous letters and petitions from residents of the Preston and Montpelier telephone exchanges requesting inclusion in an extended area service (EAS) region for southeast Idaho.  These two southeast Idaho exchanges were not included in a pending EAS case, Case No. USW-S-96-4, to consider the implementation of four calling regions, including two proposed EAS regions for southeast Idaho.  Included in these four calling regions is an Idaho Falls region which includes the following U S WEST exchanges:  Idaho Falls, Rigby, Ririe, Roberts, Blackfoot, Shelley, Firth, and Rexburg.  A Pocatello region is also being considered for a calling region, which includes the following U S WEST exchanges:  Pocatello, Inkom, American Falls, Lava Hot Springs, McCammon, Downey, Grace, Bancroft, and Soda Springs.  The letters and petitions received by the Commission request inclusion in one or both of the proposed EAS regions.

The Petitions generally assert that the Preston and Montpelier exchanges are located adjacent to the proposed Pocatello EAS region.  The Petitions maintain that because of the relative close proximity of these neighboring communities, many of the residents of Preston and Montpelier call Pocatello and Idaho Falls for work, government, and community needs.  The Petitions further state that many of the citizens are willing to pay a monthly fee for extended area service.

Based on the numerous requests received by the Commission, we find that this docket, Case No. USW-T-96-13, should be initiated to consider whether a community-of-interest exists between (1) the Preston exchange and the Pocatello and Idaho Falls exchanges, and (2) the Montpelier exchange and the Pocatello and Idaho Falls exchanges.  U S WEST and the Commission Staff should assess the community-of-interest criteria and file written comments with the Commission.

NOTICE OF PETITION

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that this proceeding has been initiated on the Commission’s own motion to consider the reasonableness of providing EAS between Preston and Pocatello and Idaho Falls, and between Montpelier and Pocatello and Idaho Falls.  The Commission has scheduled hearings for December 9, 1996 to receive evidence to determine whether a community-of-interest exists between the exchanges and to consider the reasonableness of providing EAS between these communities.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that U S WEST Communications, Inc. (U S WEST) is designated as a party to this case.  Persons desiring to intervene in this case for the purpose of presenting evidence or cross-examining witnesses must file a Petition to Intervene with the Commission pursuant to Rules 72 and 73 of the Commission’s Rules of Procedure, IDAPA 31.01.01.000 et seq. no later than November 18, 1996.  Persons desiring to present their views without parties’ rights of participation and cross-examination are not required to intervene and may present their comments without prior notification to the Commission or to other parties.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that the Commission has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to Title 61 of the Idaho Code.

NOTICE OF HEARINGS

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that public hearings in Case No. USW-T-96-13 are scheduled to begin as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1996 | MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1996 |

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| --- | --- |
| ALRED BUILDING  BEAR LAKE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS  MONPELIER, IDAHO  1:00 P.M. | ROBINSON BUILDING  FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS  PRESTON, IDAHO  7:00 P.M. |

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that all proceedings in this case will be held pursuant to the Commission’s jurisdiction under Title 61 of the Idaho Code 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.

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)

O R D E R

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that this case is initiated by the Commission to consider EAS service between Preston, Idaho and the Pocatello and Idaho Falls exchanges and between Montpelier, Idaho and the Pocatello and Idaho Falls exchanges.

 IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that U S WEST and the Commission Staff are directed to file written comments assessing the community-of-interest issues, including calling data, between the exchanges of  (1) Preston and Pocatello and Idaho Falls and (2) Montpelier and Pocatello and Idaho Falls.  These exhibits should be prepared and prefiled no later than December 1, 1996 by U S WEST and the Commission Staff for admission into the record at the hearing.  U S WEST should also determine the rate impact of including the Preston and Montpelier exchanges in an eastern Idaho EAS region and provide notice to the Preston and Montpelier customers prior to the hearings in this case.

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

                                                                                                                                      RALPH NELSON, PRESIDENT

                                                                                           MARSHA H. SMITH, COMMISSIONER

DENNIS S. HANSEN, COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:

Myrna J. Walters

Commission Secretary

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**COMMENTS AND ANNOTATIONS**

Text Box 1:

**TEXT BOXES**

Office of the Secretary

Service Date

October 31, 1996