

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Nebraska) Application No. NUSF-26
Public Service Commission, on)
its own motion, seeking to) ORDER SEEKING COMMENTS ON
establish a long-term funding) DATA SET
mechanism.) Entered: March 18, 2004

BY THE HEARING OFFICER:

O P I N I O N A N D F I N D I N G S

In order to develop a reasonably fair and verifiable method in which to base Nebraska Universal Service Fund support, the Commission proposed, in Progression Order No. 4 entered January 7, 2003, to implement a density based model and outlined a methodology for support to be calculated using "in town" and "out-of-town" household breakpoints. The Commission further proposed using census data to determine the densities relative to the "in town" and "out-of-town" households. This process has now been completed; accordingly, I find it appropriate to release the support area information to the companies for review. Attached hereto as Attachment "A" and incorporated herein are the support area numbers the Commission proposes to use to locate and group household information. This data set closely correlates to the exchange map information on file in the Commission's Communications Department.

In defining an "in town" support area, the standard continues to be an incorporated city or town with 20 or more households. The Commission is considering whether to treat census blocks which have 20 or more households and have a density of 43 households or more per square mile as separate support areas. The 20 households is the same standard used to define an "in town" support area and the 43 households per square mile density represents the density point that logically separates "in town" and "out of town" support areas. These support areas are identified by their census block ID, which is 15 digit number beginning with "31".

Attachment "A" is separated by Incumbent Local Exchange Company ("ILEC"). For each ILEC, first a company roll-up is shown, followed by a roll-up for each exchange. This is then followed by the individual support areas.

At this time, companies should respond to this Order only to formally request the Commission for a change in the values associated with a support area. The deadline for formally requesting a change will be April 2, 2004. The Commission will

then decide whether to adopt the change based upon the application and support information. As the Commission will probably not hold a hearing on the formal requests for change, companies making a formal request for change should specifically identify in their filing which change or changes the Commission should make and, further, companies should provide the all support information in their possession to justify making such change(s). Those who are not making a formal request for a change need not file anything with the Commission by the April 2, 2004 deadline.

If a discrepancy arises between a companies internal exchange maps and those on file with the Commission, companies proposing changes will also need to follow-up with the Communications Department, to ensure that the exchange maps filed with the Communications Department are accurate.

O R D E R

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Hearing Officer in the above-captioned matter that the support area information attached hereto as Attachment "A" and incorporated herein be, and it is hereby released for public comment.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that parties wishing to report a significant variance should file comments with the Commission on or before April 2, 2004. Parties filing comments should file one original and five paper copies along with one electronic copy in a Word or Excel format.

MADE AND ENTERED at Lincoln, Nebraska this 18th day of March, 2004.

By: _____
Frank E. Landis
Hearing Officer

