

SECRETARY'S RECORD, PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Nebraska)	Application No. C-5303/
Public Service Commission, on)	PI-240
its own motion, to determine)	
whether adequate service quality)	ORDER OPENING DOCKET AND
is being provided by carriers)	SEEKING COMMENT
operating within the State of)	
Nebraska.)	
)	Entered: August 10, 2021

BY THE COMMISSION:

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

The Nebraska Public Service Commission (Commission) initiates this proceeding, on its own motion, to investigate whether adequate service quality is being provided by certain carriers operating within the State of Nebraska.

Specifically, for the present time, this proceeding will focus on the service being provided by the price cap carriers providing telecommunications service in the state, namely, CenturyLink (including the Qwest and United Telephone Company of the West (UTC) entities), Windstream, and Frontier. The Commission is not equating the level of service provided by the price cap carriers named herein as the same or comparable in nature; however, similar informal consumer complaints have prompted concerns about the length of time taken to resolve consumer problems and the number service technicians available to make repairs. For example, in one recent informal complaint, the Commission was made aware that subscribers were told that it would take weeks and in some cases months for a service technician to be dispatched to their home. In another instance involving a different price cap carrier, the subscriber stated that it took roughly three weeks of calls to the carrier because they would schedule an installation then the technician would not show up at the scheduled time.

We also note that a carrier's reluctance to repair or replace aging infrastructure may have a significant public safety risk for consumers without alternatives. This may lead us to investigate how carriers are maintaining or not timely responding to repair requests where the infrastructure is older but still used to provide basic voice communications services.

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Regardless of the specific technology used to deliver telecommunications services, carriers are required to provide an adequate level of service.¹ Each exchange carrier shall make all reasonable efforts to prevent interruptions of access line service and when interruptions occur, the exchange carrier shall re-establish line service with the shortest possible delay consistent with physical conditions encountered, the available work forces and normal safety practices.²

To that end, we begin this investigation by asking carriers to respond to a few questions about how service calls are handled and the time it takes to dispatch a technician to repair or clear service problems.

1. Please provide your internal timeline for repairs from the time you process a call to the time it takes to ensure that service is working. Please describe each step in the process and provide any data to support your response.
2. Is there a specific amount of time you have determined that it should take for a technician to make certain repairs? If so, please describe.
3. Please provide the number of staff technicians you have currently employed to respond to telephone service issues in Nebraska. Please provide the number of technicians you employed in 2000 and in 2010 as a comparison. Please describe the geographic area for which each technician has the responsibility to cover. If you are currently hiring service technicians, how many positions are you advertising for currently.
4. Please describe how service technicians are dispatched.
5. What is your standard and what is the industry standard on the number of technicians per subscriber or per area to maintain your infrastructure both old and new? Are there separate standards for rural and urban areas?

The Commission seeks responses to the foregoing questions no later than September 15, 2021. Responses can be sent via electronic mail to Cullen.Robbins@nebraska.gov and to Susan.Horn@nebraska.gov.

¹ Title 291, Neb. Admin. Code, Chapter 5, § 002.02A.

² Title 291, Neb. Admin. Code, Chapter 5, § 002.03.

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O R D E R

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Nebraska Public Service Commission that this docket be and it is hereby opened.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Commission seeks responses to the questions posed herein be filed on or before **September 15, 2021** in the manner prescribed above.

ENTERED AND MADE EFFECTIVE at Lincoln, Nebraska, this 10th day of August, 2021.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:

Rod Johnson
Crystal Broadus
Mary Kadden
Tim Schram

Don Watson

Chair

ATTEST:

Michael S. Hyde

Executive Director