

SECRETARY'S RECORD, NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the rates for local
calls from coin telephones in the
State of Nebraska

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Application No. C-490
ORDER ON INVESTIGATION
Entered August 14, 1984

APPEARANCES: For Northwestern Bell Telephone Company
Richard L. Johnson, Attorney
100 South 19th Street
Omaha, Nebraska

OPINION AND FINDINGS

BY THE COMMISSION:

By order entered January 31, 1984 the Commission, on its own motion, scheduled a public hearing to consider that all telephone companies operating in Nebraska file revised tariffs establishing a rate of 20¢ each for local calls from coin telephones, except that companies whose coin telephone rate is now higher than 20¢ need not reduce said rates.

On May 22, 1984 the Commission broadened the investigation to include maintaining two-way telecommunications on public telephones.

Public hearing was held on the matter on June 25, 1984 at 2:00 p.m. in the Commission Hearing Room, Lincoln, Nebraska with appearance as shown.

Three telephone industry witnesses testified in support of higher coin phone rates; three public witnesses testified, one in support of higher rates, one opposed and one concerning customer owned coin phones.

The three telephone companies, Northwestern Bell Telephone Company, The Lincoln Telephone and Telegraph Company and General Telephone Company of the Midwest all presented costs which exceed the 20¢ proposed in this inquiry.

For most telephone companies, coin phone rates have not been increased for about thirty years although all costs have risen over this period.

It is reasonable and necessary that coin phone rates be uniform throughout the state; therefore all telephone companies should be directed to file tariffs establishing a rate of 20¢ for local calls from coin telephones, except that companies whose rate is now higher than 20¢ need not reduce said rate.

The evidence indicates that the only telephone company providing any one-way coin phone service is Northwestern Bell Telephone Company. Only public coin service is so affected, semi-public service is all two-way. The company indicated that it was engaged in a program to convert public coin phones to outgoing calls only. This was being done to discourage loitering, in many cases at the request of the property owner. Public telephones in remote locations would remain two-way.

We find that Northwestern Bell's program should be modified. All semi-public phones should be two-way. All public phones should be two-way, except that public phones on private property may be one-way if so requested in writing by the property

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owner and public phones on public property may be one-way if so requested in writing by the city or other government agency having jurisdiction over the property.

One of the public witnesses, Mr. Gerald Becker testified in support of customer ownership of coin phones. Minnesota has recently adopted regulations concerning customer owned coin phones and the Federal Communications Commission has recently allowed registration of coin phones.

We find, based on the evidence presented, that the Commission should consider the adoption of rules and regulations governing the connection of customer provided coin telephones and the staff should be directed to draft proposed rules.

ORDER

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Nebraska Public Service Commission that all telephone companies operating in Nebraska be and they are hereby ordered to file tariffs within sixty (60) days from the date of this order establishing a rate of 20¢ for local calls from coin telephones, except that companies whose rate is now higher than 20¢ need not reduce said rate.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, except for good cause shown, all coin telephones shall be converted within one hundred twenty (120) days from the date of this order.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Northwestern Bell Telephone Company provide that all semi-public phones be two-way; that all public phones be two-way except that public phones on private property may be one-way if so requested in writing by the property owner and public phones on public property may be one-way if so requested in writing by the city or other government agency having jurisdiction over the property.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Commission staff draft proposed rules and regulations governing customer provided coin telephones for consideration by the Commission.

MADE AND ENTERED at Lincoln, Nebraska, this 14th day of August, 1984.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Harold D. Simpson
Chairman

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:

ATTEST:

Terrence L. Kuback
Executive Secretary