

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Commission Application No. C-2483/PI-43  
on its own motion, to re-examine  
its retail quality of service ) PROGRESSION ORDER NO. 1  
standards for all local exchange  
carriers operating within the  
state of Nebraska. ) Entered: May 1, 2001

BY THE COMMISSION:

On March 9, 1999, Aliant Communications Inc. (Aliant) notified the Nebraska Public Service Commission (Commission) of its intention to merge with ALLTEL Corporation (ALLTEL). This merger became final when it received Aliant shareholder approval as well as the approval of the Federal Communications Commission. Between the announcement and the execution of the merger, the Commission engaged in an examination of its appropriate role and jurisdiction over such matters. This examination included the opening of an investigative docket (C-2016/PI-26) on March 23, 1999, and one public hearing which was held in Lincoln, Nebraska on April 20, 1999.

While the Commission found that it had no jurisdiction to approve or disapprove the Aliant/ALLTEL merger, it specifically affirmed its ability and responsibility to ensure that the quality of service provided to the affected customers would not be adversely impacted by the merger. In order to help fulfill this responsibility, the Commission requested that Aliant submit "baseline" service quality information to the Commission at the time of the public hearing. This information included statistics regarding Aliant's speed of answer for toll and directory assistance, repair and business office functions; service order intervals; provisioning commitments met; held orders; and its promptness in clearing out-of-service reports.

On March 6, 2001, the Commission opened the above-captioned docket to re-examine retail quality of service standards for all local exchange carriers operating within the state. In that order, we requested that interested parties file comments on various issues. On March 26, 2001, we extended the comment deadline at the request of one of the interested parties to May 21, 2001.

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

A period of time has passed since the completion of the Aliant/ALLTEL merger, and the Commission has since opened this general investigative docket regarding service quality. We find it appropriate at this juncture to review the Aliant/ALLTEL service quality comparison as part of this docket. While the initial comments in Docket No. C-2483/PI-43 were not due until May 21, 2001, we will proceed with the Aliant/ALLTEL's service quality review in a more expedited time frame. The discussion and examination of ALLTEL's current service quality statistics and associated testimony could provide the Commission with valuable guidance with regard to what appropriate service quality indicators are and what periodic data reporting should be required in today's telecommunications environment. Therefore, we find that a June 18, 2001, hearing should be held to discuss ALLTEL's service quality information and statistics and to determine whether it has improved, suffered or remained constant in Nebraska since the completion of the Aliant/ALLTEL merger. The comment deadline should also be extended with respect to all interested parties to July 18, 2001.

While the Commission has no direct jurisdiction with regard to manpower and employment levels maintained by telecommunications carriers, we find that certain customer service-related functions must be adequately staffed in order to provide consumers with acceptable levels of service. Therefore, the Commission requests service quality report information and testimony as part of this review regarding ALLTEL's current and projected future Nebraska workforce to the extent that these staffing levels directly affect ALLTEL's service quality.

As we feel it is appropriate, the Commission intends to conduct a similar examination and/or hearing with regard to the quality of service of other local telecommunications carriers which have recently changed ownership or control.

## O R D E R

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Nebraska Public Service Commission that for the reasons described herein, that the Commission shall conduct an examination of ALLTEL's service quality to determine whether it has improved, suffered or remained constant in Nebraska since the completion of the Aliant/ALLTEL merger.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the above-captioned progression order be and it is hereby entered so that the Commission can undertake this examination as part of its comprehensive effort to re-examine its retail quality of service rules and regulations.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Commission shall hold a public hearing on this matter at 1:30 p.m. on June 18, 2001, in the Commission Hearing Room, at Lincoln, Nebraska.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that ALLTEL file service quality data with the Commission on or before June 1, 2001. The report information shall include monthly reports from January 2000, through April 2001, and shall include statistics regarding ALLTEL's speed of answer for toll and directory assistance, repair and business office functions; service order intervals; provisioning commitments met; held orders; trouble reports per 100 stations by exchange; and its promptness in clearing out-of-service reports.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that interested parties be permitted to provide oral testimony at the hearing and/or provide written testimony to the Commission on or before June 14, 2001. Written and oral testimony must be directly relevant to service quality issues.

IT IS FINALLY ORDERED that the May 21, 2001, comment date be extended to July 18, 2001.

MADE AND ENTERED at Lincoln, Nebraska this 1st day of May, 2001.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:

Chairman

ATTEST:

Executive Director