

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Petition) Application No. C-2716
from the residents of the)
Bertrand exchange, served by)
Citizens Communications,) GRANTED
requesting extended area service)
(EAS) to the Holdrege exchange,)
served by Qwest Communications.) Entered: March 4, 2003

BY THE COMMISSION:

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

In a petition filed March 29, 2002, residents from the Bertrand exchange, served by Citizens Communications (Citizens), requested extended area service (EAS) to the Holdrege exchange, served by Qwest Communications (Qwest). On April 1, 2002, the Commission verified that the petitions contained a sufficient amount of signatures. Notice of this Petition was published in The Daily Record, Omaha, Nebraska on April 3, 2002.

As required by Rule 002.27C3 of the Commission's Telecommunications Rules and Regulations, Title 291, Chapter 5, a point-to-point usage study was commenced to determine if a community of interest existed. On June 5, 2002, the Commission verified that the traffic study information filed in the above-captioned docket represented a sufficient interest from the customers under Commission rules and directed Qwest and Citizens to establish proposed rates to implement the EAS plan. Proposed rates were provided to the Commission for EAS between Bertrand and Holdrege by the October 3, 2002 deadline.

The proposed additional monthly rate additives are as follows:

Bertrand Customers
\$1.75 per line additive

Holdrege Customers
\$.20 per line additive

On January 10, 2003, the Commission approved balloting the affected customers in the Bertrand exchange pursuant to Rule 002.27C6.

An informational meeting was held in Bertrand on November 20, 2002. After Commission approval of the ballots on January 10, 2003, the ballots were mailed with a return date of no later than February 14, 2003. Of the 375 ballots received, 269

ballots were in favor of the EAS proposal and 106 ballots indicated opposition to the plan. Thus, 72 percent of the Bertrand subscribers voted in favor of the plan, exceeding the 50 percent benchmark required by Commission Rule. The request to implement extended area service between the Bertrand exchange and the Holdrege exchange should be granted with the new service provided on or before May 8, 2003.

O R D E R

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Nebraska Public Service Commission that Application No. C-2716 be, and it is hereby, granted and the residents of the Bertrand exchange served by Citizens Communications are authorized to obtain extended area service to the Holdrege exchange, served by Qwest Communications.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that such rates are to be implemented on or before May 8, 2003, concurrent with the availability of the new EAS.

IT IS FINNALLY ORDERED that if the May 8, 2003, implementation date cannot be met, the parties shall advise the Commission on its progress.

MADE AND ENTERED at Lincoln, Nebraska, this 4th day of March, 2003.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:

Chair

ATTEST:

Executive Director