

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Commission,     )     Application No. C-2830/  
on its own motion, to review the     )     PI-66  
Qwest Corporation rate center     )  
consolidation plan.     )     ORDER APPROVING RATE CENTER  
  )     CONSOLIDATION  
  )  
  )     Entered: March 11, 2003

BY THE COMMISSION:

The Commission opened this docket on November 5, 2003, to review a rate center consolidation plan proposed by Qwest Corporation (Qwest).

Qwest proposes to consolidate rate centers for the 402 area code as follows: Rate centers at South Sioux City and Dakota City would be consolidated into one rate center at South Sioux City; rate centers at Tekamah and Lyons would be consolidated into one rate center at Tekamah; rate centers at Elkhorn, Bennington and Valley would be consolidated into one rate center at Elkhorn; and rate centers in Gretna and Springfield would be consolidated into one rate center at Gretna.

The Commission sought comments from interested parties on Qwest's proposed rate center consolidation plan for the 402 area code in Nebraska. No comments were filed. According to Qwest, nine of its rate centers in the 402 area code can be consolidated down to four without changes to existing local calling areas for Qwest customers.

The Commission, by virtue of authority delegated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) [FCC order 00-104, Docket No. 99-200, Number Resource Optimization], is responsible for the conservation of telephone numbers in the state of Nebraska. One recommended methodology for number conservation is the consolidation of telephone rate centers.

Rate centers encompass specific geographical areas and historically have been used by the telecommunications industry to distinguish between local and toll calls. Small rate centers may contain only a single exchange or switch, whereas larger rate centers may consist of multiple exchanges and/or switches. As local calling areas have expanded or otherwise changed over the years, it has become evident that there are situations where two or more rate centers have exactly the same local calling area and are contiguous to one another. In fact, it is these scenarios that represent the best candidates for consideration of rate center consolidation in Nebraska's 402 area code at this time.

## F I N D I N G S     A N D     C O N C L U S I O N S

NXX codes are assigned by rate center, not by exchange. Each rate center operated by an incumbent local exchange carrier (ILEC) has at least one prefix, or NXX, associated with it. An NXX contains 10,000 telephone numbers (NXX-0000 through NXX-9999). Prior to the roll-out of number pooling, if a competitive local exchange carrier (CLEC) wished to serve customers within an ILEC rate center, the CLEC would also be assigned an entire NXX. Consequently, in many cases, large quantities of numbers have gone unused or are stranded.

Consolidating two or more rate centers makes all assigned NXXs viable throughout the new rate center. When local number portability is implemented, customers may port their numbers anywhere within the new rate center. If number pooling is in place, service providers may also donate to and receive numbers in blocks of 1,000 from the pool for use throughout the entire consolidated rate center. This will result in reducing the assignment of full NXX codes, minimizing unused or stranded numbers and ultimately delaying the exhaust of the 402 area code.

Rate center consolidation must preserve the integrity of the E911 routing system. Qwest assures the Commission the selective routers serving the candidate rate centers are configured to properly route calls to the correct public safety answering points (PSAP) after consolidation. Once two or more rate centers consolidate, local number portability practices will allow customers moving within the newly-formed rate center to take their number with them to a new location which may be in an area previously part of a separate rate center. For this reason, the PSAPs operated by emergency service providers must be able to recognize all NXXs in the newly consolidated rate center.

Based on the guidelines described above, the Commission finds that nine Qwest rate centers in Nebraska can be consolidated into four. This consolidation (shown below) can be accomplished without changes to the existing local calling areas for Qwest customers or changes to the Qwest network.

<u>Existing Rate Center Name</u>	<u>Consolidated Rate Center Name</u>
South Sioux City (SOSIOUX CY)	
Dakota City (DAKOTACITY)	South Sioux City (SOSIOUX CY)
<hr/>	
Tekamah (TEKAMAH)	
Lyons (LYONS)	Tekamah (TEKAMAH)
<hr/>	
Elkhorn (ELKHORN)	
Bennington (BENNINGTON)	
Valley (VALLEY)	Elkhorn (ELKHORN)
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Gretna (GRETNA)	
Springfield (SPRINGFLD)	Gretna (GRETNA)

In determining timing for implementation of rate center consolidation, the Commission takes into consideration recommended intervals for industry notification through Telcordia's BIRRDs database (Business Integrated Rating and Routing Database System) and its output products (notably the Local Exchange Routing Guide), as well as required network disclosures. Service providers are advised that information about the new rate centers may include revised vertical and horizontal coordinates used to determine distance between rate centers and whether a call is local or should be billed as toll.

Qwest requested a minimum of 6.5 months to achieve consolidation.

#### O R D E R

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Nebraska Public Service Commission that Qwest initiate the implementation of rate center consolidation as described herein.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that consolidation shall be complete within seven months of the effective date of this order.

IT IS FINALLY ORDERED that Qwest shall notify the Commission of the projected date of consolidation at least 30 days prior to consolidation taking effect.

MADE AND ENTERED at Lincoln, Nebraska, this 11th day of  
March, 2002.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:

Chair

ATTEST:

Executive Director