



---

## Colorado PUC Connections Newsletter – June 2000

---

*Just click any article. Ctrl-Home to return to top.*

### **STARTING POINT [\\*](#)**

**PUC approves gas rate case settlement [\\*](#)**

**Impact of Public Service settlement on monthly bills [\\*](#)**

**FCC grants local calling area waivers [\\*](#)**

**Hearing set this month on sale of exchanges [\\*](#)**

**Annual pipeline safety seminar draws crowd [\\*](#)**

**Inside connections [\\*](#)**

**Commission takes on youthful look with interns [\\*](#)**

**Phillips County phone rates to be examined [\\*](#)**

**Positive charges [\\*](#)**

**Civil Penny-alties [\\*](#)**

**Service quality plan rings up additional refund [\\*](#)**

**Customers due at least \$6.9 million for U S West's 1999 performance [\\*](#)**

**Workshops to focus on 271 competitive issues [\\*](#)**

**Customers who paid to block pay-per-call numbers due refund [\\*](#)**

**Public Service files plan to close Leyden facility [\\*](#)**

**Public Service could owe \$3 million refund [\\*](#)**

**But company seeking adjustments for some weather interruptions [\\*](#)**

**PUC to consider modifications to 9-1-1 rules [\\*](#)**

**New law deregulates directory assistance, private line services [\\*](#)**

---

## STARTING POINT

The lazy days of summer will soon be upon us, but the upcoming months will be anything but idle here at the Commission. One area where we continue to push ahead is with the effort to overhaul and streamline our rules. As with most undertakings of this magnitude, the project is taking longer than originally anticipated. But I strongly believe the results will be worth the wait.

Anyone who has conducted business before this agency knows that our rules are lengthy, complex and sometimes difficult to understand. The PUC has about 2,400 pages of rules organized by specific, discrete topic. Our intention through the rules recodification project is to come up with a final product of about one-quarter that size.

In addition to making the rules more manageable and useable, our objectives are to provide consistency throughout the rules, recommend changes to cumbersome or outdated rules, and make the rule language more understandable.

Currently, the PUC has 49 separate sets of rules, each dealing with specific topics. Under the new system, the rules would be reorganized in series format by general topic. For example, the rules of Practice & Procedure would be contained in the 100 series; Electricity rules in the 200 series; Gas rules in the 300 series, and so on. Under each general series, similar categories for further indexing would be used. For example, rules governing operating authority would be found in similarly numbered sections, whether they were for transportation, telecommunications or electricity, to retain consistency throughout the rules.

The recodification project is not designed to make any policy changes to the rules. However, as we identify areas where policy changes may be appropriate, we can deal with those rules on a parallel track and plug them into the new format when finished.

I expect that we will have the proposed recodification of our rules completed by this summer. Once the proposed draft rules are completed and have been through a final staff review, we intend to seek input from all of our stakeholders to try to resolve any differences as early in the process as possible. Our goal is to have the recodified rules adopted by the end of the year.

It will be a busy summer. But I think everyone will be pleased by the outcome. The project will make the rules more user-friendly, and lower transaction costs for people who do business here.

---

## **PUC approves gas rate case settlement**

The Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC) has approved a settlement reached in the rate-design phase of Public Service Company of Colorado's natural gas rate case.

The PUC at deliberations on May 24 adopted in its entirety an agreement negotiated by the Public Service, PUC staff, the Office of

Consumer Counsel, and other parties in the case.

Under the approved settlement, Public Service Company's proposal to restructure residential gas rates will not be implemented. The company had proposed to collect non-gas costs for the residential class based entirely on a flat monthly fee of \$16.9 per month, rather than a combination of a fixed metering and billing charge and a usage charge.

Instead, rates for the residential and other rate classes will be set using a traditional two-part rate design. Customers will continue to be billed a monthly metering and billing charge and a usage-based distribution system charge as they are now.

Under the settlement, the residential metering and billing charge will increase from the present \$7.41 per month to \$9.09 per month. The commercial metering and billing charge will increase from \$11.65 to \$16.37 a month. Increases from the present rates are due, in part, to increases in the company's costs of providing metering and billing services.

The residential usage-based distribution system charge, which excludes gas costs, will decrease from \$.1195 per therm to \$.0987 per therm to offset the increase in the metering and billing charge. A therm is a measure of energy, equal to 100,000 Btus, used by Public Service to bill its customers for natural gas usage. The commercial usage charge will decrease from \$.1083 per therm to \$.0926 per therm.

The average residential customer uses about 80 therms per month. Under the approved rate design, the total monthly gas bill for those customers will decrease from \$43.35 to \$42.13.

"This is not a final resting point for what the rate structure will look like, but it gets us on the road to preparing for an unbundled natural gas environment," PUC Chairman Ray Gifford said. "The settlement is in the public interest and will provide just and reasonable rates for the time period they are in effect."

The changes approved under the settlement are expected to go into effect on July 29, 2000.

<b>Impact of Public Service settlement on monthly bills</b>			
<b>Month Usage Therms</b>	<b>Present Bill</b>	<b>Initial Public Service Company Proposal</b>	<b>Approved Settlement</b>
0	\$ 7.41	\$16.49	\$ 9.09
20	\$16.40	\$22.78	\$17.35
40	\$25.38	\$29.06	\$25.61
60	\$34.37	\$35.35	\$33.87
<b>80 (avg. resident)</b>	<b>\$43.35</b>	<b>\$41.63</b>	<b>\$42.13</b>
100	\$52.34	\$47.92	\$50.39
120	\$61.33	\$54.21	\$58.65

## **FCC grants local calling area waivers**

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has approved waivers that will allow local calling area expansions for Leadville and Fairplay to proceed as planned.

The FCC in May granted petitions by U S West Communications that it be allowed to carry local calls across the 719/970 area code boundary in Summit and Eagle counties. The waivers will allow the local calling area for Leadville to be expanded to include the exchanges of Dillon, Breckenridge and Vail. Fairplay will be able to add the Dillon and Breckenridge exchanges to its local calling area.

The Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC) in February approved local calling area expansions for five communities in the 719 and 970 area codes. In addition to Leadville and Fairplay, the PUC found that a sufficient "community of interest" existed to warrant expanded local calling in the Steamboat Springs/Craig area, Fruita/Grand Junction area, and Montrose.

Federal approval was required for Leadville and Fairplay because the proposed local calling expansions cross the area code boundary.

Some of the calling area changes approved by the PUC already have been implemented by U S West. Local calling between Fruita and the exchanges of DeBeque, Delta, Olathe, Palisade and Parachute began in May. Local calling between Montrose and the Grand Junction/Fruita area is expected to start around the end of June.

With the ruling by the FCC, implementation of the local calling area

changes for Fairplay is expected to take place around the end of the summer. The Leadville expansion, which also requires the replacement of a central office switch, is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Local calling expansion for the Yampa Valley communities – which will tie Steamboat Springs, Craig, Hayden, Yampa and Oak Creek into a single local calling area – is not expected to be implemented until the spring of 2001. That project requires construction of new fiber optic facilities before the conversion can be made.

None of the expansions will increase basic local rates for customers, thanks to an agreement reached in 1999 between the PUC, U S West and the Office of Consumer Counsel. Under that agreement, \$8 million was set aside by U S West for local calling area expansions in the 719 and 970 area codes at no cost to customers.

---

## **Hearing set this month on sale of exchanges**

A proposal by U S West Communications to sell 17 rural telephone exchanges in Colorado to Citizens Telecommunications Company is set for hearing this month.

An evidentiary hearing is scheduled for June 20 before an administrative law judge at the Public Utilities Commission.

U S West and Citizens filed a joint application in March for approval of the sale, which would include the exchanges of Alamosa, Buena Vista, Calhan, Crested Butte, Del Norte, Fairplay, Gunnison, Julesburg, Meeker, Mesa Verde, Monte Vista, Oak Creek, Ovid, Peyton, Salida, Southfork and Yampa. The sale would involve approximately 45,000 customer lines and is part of a larger proposal by Citizens to buy about 530,000 U S West lines in nine states.

The PUC must determine whether the sale is in the public interest. Among the issues to be considered are: the financial viability of the buyer; the quality of service the buyer proposes to provide customers in the 17 exchanges; and the effect of the sale on customers in the remaining U S West exchanges.

Citizens Telecommunications Company provides local telephone service in 13 states, focusing primarily on rural areas. Under the proposal, there would be no change in monthly rates due to the sale.

PUC staff and the Office of Consumer Counsel will also provide

testimony in the case. Following the hearing, the administrative law judge will issue a recommended decision to the PUC.

If approved, it would be the second sale of rural exchanges by U S West in Colorado in the last six years. The company sold 45 exchanges to Pacific Telecom, Inc., now CenturyTel, in 1994.

Customers who wish to provide comments about the proposed sale may write to the PUC, 1580 Logan St., OL2, Denver, CO 80203. Comments should be addressed to Docket No. 00A-128T and should be received by June 20.

---

## **Annual pipeline safety seminar draws crowd**

About 130 people attended the annual Pipeline Safety Seminar hosted by the Public Utilities Commission in Colorado Springs in March.

The three-day seminar, presented by the Transportation Safety Institute (TSI) of the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Office of Pipeline Safety, covers topics designed to ensure the safe operation of natural gas systems in Colorado.

Gas distribution and transmission system operators from around the state attended the event, which is designed for operators of investor-owned and municipal gas systems, as well as master meter and propane system owners, and managers who maintain underground gas piping.

Lane Miller from TSI in Oklahoma City, was the principal speaker. Sammy Russo of APR Laboratories Inc, who investigated the 1994 Steamboat Springs explosion, also was an instructor.

The sessions also included exhibits and presentations by consultants and industry experts regarding the practical aspects of operations, maintenance and emergency response. State and federal pipeline safety regulations also were discussed.

---

## **Inside connections**

**Randy Garroutte** likes to tell people that he learned his math and financial skills by reading the Daily Racing Form as a youth.

Odds are, he might be telling the truth.

Randy is a Senior Financial Analyst at the PUC, transferring from the Division of Banking in 1994. His job entails review of various utility filings to determine their financial justification and the impact on utility companies and their customers. He also audits the books and records of utilities to ensure compliance with PUC rules.

"I enjoy the challenge and diversity of my job," said Randy, who has worked in the areas of transportation, telecommunications and energy during his time at the PUC. "It is always something new."

Randy also serves as coordinator of the PUC's mediation program, which brings utility customers and companies to the table to try to resolve disputes without having to go through the time and expense of formal hearings.

His professional background includes stints as an accountant, stockbroker and bank examiner. He taught at the Federal Reserve Bank in Washington, D.C. He is a graduate of the University of Nebraska and holds both securities and insurance licenses.

But Randy insists his financial training began at a much earlier age – at the horse track. His grandfather, father and three uncles were trainers, and several are former jockeys. His family continues to own and train thoroughbred race horses.

Randy came to Colorado in 1976 to work at Centennial Race Track. He was the Assistant General Manager of a race track in Nebraska for a time, and also worked as a steward.

"Some people say I still remind them of certain parts of a horse's anatomy," he says jokingly.

In addition to horse racing, Randy lists most sports among his hobbies, and he is a huge baseball fan. His cousin was a part-owner of the San Diego Padres baseball team until two years ago, which provided Randy with the opportunity to attend spring training with the team and the 1992 All-Star game in San Diego.

(Inside Connections will feature a PUC employee each edition as selected by PUC section chiefs.)

---

## **Commission takes on youthful look with interns**

The Colorado Public Utilities Commission will have a decidedly "younger" look to it this summer.

Five students from the University of Colorado law school will be spending the summer working at the PUC as interns.

The internships are the result of a newly-established relationship linking the PUC, the law school and the University of Colorado Interdisciplinary Telecommunications Program. **Paul Farley**, supervisor of the PUC's administrative law judge and advisory sections, who helped arrange the internships, said the goal is to make it a long-term program.

"It's a win-win situation. We obtain the services of a highly-skilled law or graduate student, and they gain invaluable work experience and practical lessons in regulatory and policy issues," Farley said.

One intern has been assigned to each of the three Commissioners, and the other two are working in the utilities section. Below is a brief biographical sketch of each of them:

**Thom LeDoux** grew up in Canon City, and graduated from the University of Colorado in 1996 with a degree in philosophy. He spent two years at SCC Communications in Boulder, working in the wireless department on enhanced wireless 9-1-1 deployment.

He just finished his first year at the CU Law School, where his interests include telecommunications and politics. Thom is working this summer as Chairman Gifford's intern. In his free time, he likes to run, mountain climb and rock climb.

**Gwen Landwehr** was born and raised in Colorado. She graduated from Colorado State University in 1994 and worked on Sen. Wayne Allard's staff for five years. Prior to law school, she was a legislative assistant, working primarily on issues before the commerce, judiciary and budget committees, with a focus on telecommunication and aviation issues.

Gwen is working as an assistant to Commissioner Page. In her free time, she enjoys running, cooking, politics, hiking, trap and skeet shooting, and attempting Martha Stewart projects.

**Jim Wooll** is a native of Wisconsin, who grew up mainly in Texas, went to college and lived in Michigan, and finally moved to Colorado in August 1999 in order to attend law school. Jim has undergraduate degrees in communications and economics from the University of Michigan.

After graduation, he worked for three years as a public affairs associate at Holnam Inc., a cement manufacturer. Jim is spending the summer working as Commissioner Hix's intern. In his free time, Jim enjoys sailing, skiing, softball, as well as home and automobile



maintenance.

**Adam Peters** is a transplant from upstate New York, currently preparing to complete his final year of law school. He is focusing on both natural resources law and telecommunications law and policy. His undergraduate degree in political science was obtained from Washington University in St. Louis in 1997.

Adam has worked as a research assistant for the Natural Resources Law Center in Boulder. At the PUC, he is working in the utilities section on issues surrounding the deregulation of the natural gas industry. In his spare time, Adam enjoys the outdoors, soccer, cello and golf.

**Brian Petroff**, from Hastings, Neb., is a second-year law student and a first-year student in the Interdisciplinary Telecommunications Program at CU. He hopes to eventually practice telecommunications law. He holds undergraduate degrees in philosophy and English from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa.

Brian has worked as a law clerk at private firms in both Boulder and Hastings, Neb. He is serving as an intern in the utilities section, working primarily on issues concerning the 271 competitive checklist application. Brian is an Eagle Scout, an avid snow skier, and studied in Cuba in 1997.

---

## **Phillips County phone rates to be examined**

A proposal by Phillips County Telephone Company to raise basic residential rates by 380 percent and business rates by 20 percent will go to hearing in July.

The Public Utilities Commission will conduct an evidentiary hearing July 27-28 at the PUC offices in Denver. A public comment hearing will be held from 4-7 p.m. on Monday, July 24, in the Community Room at the Phillips County Courthouse, 221 S. Interocean Avenue, in Holyoke.

Phillips County serves about 1,500 customers in northeastern Colorado, including the towns of Holyoke and Amherst.

The company is seeking an increase in annual revenues of about \$300,000. Under the proposal, residential rates would increase from \$4.17 a month to \$15.81 a month, while business rates would jump from \$7.22 a month to \$18.86 a month.

The PUC suspended the request in April and ordered a hearing to determine whether the proposed increases are just and reasonable. Among the issues to be considered is whether the proposal is permissible under the residential "rate cap" contained in Colorado law. That provision limits residential rate increases to a maximum of 5 percent a year, unless the improvements were ordered by the PUC for basic local telephone service.

PUC staff and the Office of Consumer Counsel have intervened in the case.

---

## Positive charges

Kudos to **Dee Thompson, Shirley Wallace, Bill Wiley, Joyce Reed** and **Bea Gonzalez** from DORA for pitching in and covering **Lynn Randall's** duties while she was recovering from surgery. And Lynn, welcome back.

Special recognition to **Steve Pott, Ernie Tronco, Mark Schumann, Jewell Beach** and **Marisela Chavez** for their extra efforts in organizing and hosting the PUC's annual Pipeline Safety Seminar in Colorado Springs in March.

The PUC welcomes the following new employees: **Rochelle Butcher**, an Administrative Assistant in the Utilities section; **Harry DiDomenico**, an Information Specialist in the External Affairs section; **Paul Farley**, supervisor of the Administrative Hearings and Advisory sections; **Jamie Jack**, a Rate/Financial Analyst in the Utilities section; **Karlton Kunzie**, a Rate/Financial Analyst in the Utilities section; and **Annette Quaintance**, an Administrative Assistant in the Administrative Services section. Also, **Roxi Nielsen** has moved from the External Affairs section to a Rate/Financial Analyst position in the Utilities section.

---

## Civil Penny-ties

PUC compliance investigators Josef Mason, Bob Laws and Guy Quaintance showed plenty of cents recently when a limousine company showed up with a wagon load of pennies to pay off a civil penalty. The company was fined \$300 – or 30,000 pennies – for failing to remove external markings from its vehicles as required by PUC rules.

---

## **Service quality plan rings up additional refund**

### ***Customers due at least \$6.9 million for U S West's 1999 performance***

U S West Communications must give back at least \$6.90 million to customers based on its service quality performance over the last eight months of 1999, and the amount could be as much as \$7.84 million.

The refunds would be in addition to the \$12.70 million ordered by the Public Utilities Commission for service quality rule violations between in Jan. 1, 1998, and April 22, 1999.

A five-year regulatory plan approved by the PUC in 1999 requires U S West to meet certain service standards or provide up to \$15 million a year in automatic customer bill credits. The standards measure the company's performance in the areas of timely provisioning of service and repair, call completion, and access to business offices.

On March 31 of this year, U S West filed its 1999 service quality results, showing that the company owed refunds for six of the eight categories contained in the service quality plan, including the maximum amount for held orders and repair reports cleared within 24 hours. Based on a pro-rated calculation from May 12 through Dec. 31, U S West said it owed approximately \$6.90 million in refunds for 1999, or about \$2.67 per customer.

PUC staff and the Office of Consumer Counsel have reviewed the company's filing and disputed some of the calculations, including the starting date for the service quality agreement. PUC staff and the OCC contend that the agreement became effective on April 22, and that refunds should be calculated from that date.

Based on adjustments recommended by the PUC and OCC staffs, U S West could owe as much as \$7.84 million.

According to the agreement, refunds for the previous year's performance are to be issued during the June billing cycle. A hearing may be required to resolve the differences between the company and the PUC and OCC staffs.

U S West is expected to issue the \$6.90 million in customer refunds in June, with a possible additional refund coming later depending on the outcome of the disputed amount.

---

## **Workshops to focus on 271 competitive issues**

Five three-day workshops have been scheduled in Colorado to address whether U S West Communication's network is sufficiently accessible to competitors that want to provide local telecommunications service.

Such a determination is required before U S West can start offering long-distance service within its 14-state region.

The company late last year filed with the PUC a notice of intent to file a Section 271 checklist application with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Section 271 of the 1996 federal telecommunications act sets out a procedure by which regional Bell operating companies could be allowed to provide long distance service in exchange for opening their networks to local competition.

Section 271 includes a 14-point checklist of required competitive elements. The FCC makes the final determination, on a state-by-state basis, based on consultation with state PUCs and the Department of Justice. State commissions develop a factual record and make a recommendation to the FCC.

Like many other states, Colorado has chosen to use a collaborative approach to its fact-finding mission. Instead of lengthy, litigated hearings, the PUC will use a series of technical workshops in an attempt to resolve as many competitive issues as possible.

The first workshop was scheduled for June 6-8. Additional workshops will be held Aug. 1-3, Sept. 19-21, Oct. 31-Nov. 2, and Dec. 5-7, with each workshop focusing on specific items in the 14-point checklist.

The workshop format has been used successfully in the past in Colorado. The PUC used a similar approach four years ago when the state was developing its initial rules to open the local telephone market to competition. It is hoped that Colorado's Section 271 review can be completed by the end of the year.

---

## **Customers who paid to block pay-per-call numbers due refund**

About 10,000 customers of U S West Communications are entitled to refunds of charges they paid to block calls to 900, 976 and other pay-per-call numbers.

The company has applied to make refunds to customers in Colorado who ordered Pay Per Call Restriction between Dec. 9, 1999 and March 19, 2000. Pay Per Call Restriction enables individual residential and business customers to prohibit completion of calls to 1+976, 1+900, 1+960 and other pay-per-call services.

Federal Communications Commission regulations require local exchange carriers to offer to their subscribers an option to block access to certain service access codes at no charge on a one-time basis to customers subscribing to a new telephone number for a period of 60 days after the number is effective. Between Dec. 9 and March 19, U S West erroneously charged customers a \$6 fee for installation of the pay-per-call restriction service.

The company is proposing to issue a bill credit during its August billing cycle of \$6 plus interest to all customers who were assessed the charge in error. The total refund will be about \$61,840, according to the company.

Any potential customer for Pay Per Call Restriction will be advised that there is no non-recurring charge for the initial installation within 60 days from receipt of the telephone number. Customers who order the service after the 60-day time period must pay the \$6 charge.

The Public Utilities Commission must approve the refund plan, and is expected to take up the issue in July.

---

## **Public Service files plan to close Leyden facility**

Public Service Company of Colorado has filed for the Public Utilities Commission's approval of a plan to close the Leyden Natural Gas Storage Facility northwest of Arvada.

The company is proposing to abandon the storage facility after 40 years of operation. In its application, Public Service stated that "an underground gas storage field of this nature is no longer compatible with the land uses and development in the surrounding area" and that the ultimate cost in continuing to operate the facility would exceed the costs necessary to replace it.

The PUC has scheduled a hearing on the matter for July 27, and Public Service has requested a decision by mid-August.

Under the proposed closure plan, Public Service would operate Leyden

at reduced pressure and capacity during the 2000-2001 heating season. Beginning in the fall of 2001, the Leyden facility will be decommissioned in three overlapping phases. The first will involve removing the natural gas from the facility by pumping water into the storage area to displace it. This phase is scheduled to end in the summer of 2003.

The second phase will involve plugging and abandoning the natural gas injection and withdrawal wells, water wells and observation wells. The company will restore these well sites to their natural state by planting grass, shrubs and other plants found in the area. This phase will begin in the spring of 2002.

The final phase involves removing processing equipment from the site and modifying compressor stations that will remain part of the company's natural gas delivery system. This phase will be completed by the end of 2005.

The cost of shutting down the Leyden facility is estimated to be \$8.6 million. Public Service said it intends to file a proposal at a later time with the PUC to recover the costs of decommissioning the facility from the company's one million natural gas customers.

Public Service converted the former Leyden underground coal mine to a natural gas storage facility in the early 1960s to benefit customers throughout the Denver metro area. For the past 40 years, the Leyden facility has helped maintain gas pressure during cold snaps to avoid natural gas outages, and it has helped to keep rates low by using low-cost storage gas during cold spells when natural gas is sold at a premium.

The company said it will contract with other natural gas suppliers and storage providers to satisfy peak winter demands once the Leyden facility is closed.

---

## **Public Service could owe \$3 million refund**

### ***But company seeking adjustments for some weather interruptions***

Public Service Company of Colorado could owe up to \$3 million in customer refunds for exceeding outage standards in 1999, but the company has requested adjustments for a number of weather-related events.

According to Public Service's annual service quality report filed on

April 17, the company exceeded allowable benchmarks for outage minutes on both a regional and total system basis in 1999. Under the quality of service plan adopted by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), the company is at risk for up to \$3 million if it fails to meet the outage standards.

However, Public Service has requested exclusions for 12 outages in 1999 caused by high winds and other weather-related events. If those outage times are removed, Public Service said it would have met the required standards for the year.

PUC staff is reviewing the company's filing and has until June 8 to file its report. If the staff recommends against granting the exclusions, a hearing may necessary to resolve the differences.

The PUC adopted a five-year quality-of-service plan for Public Service Company in 1996 as part of its approval of the company's merger with Southwestern Public Service Company of Texas. Under the plan, the company is at risk for \$5 million a year based on its performance in the categories of electric service unavailability, number of customer complaints, and telephone response time.

For 1997 and 1998, the first two years of the plan, Public Service Company met the standards in all three categories. For 1999, the company reported achieving the benchmarks in all categories except electric service unavailability.

Under the plan, Public Service must limit outages to an average of 79 minutes per year per customer over its entire system to meet the benchmark. Without the exclusions, the company's average outage duration was 84.44 minutes in 1999. The highest regional outage average may not exceed 119 minutes. The average for the Front Range region was 158.52 minutes, without adjustments.

If the company is required to issue refunds for 1999, then the amount at risk in this category for calendar year 2000 will increase from \$3 million to \$4.2 million.

---

## **PUC to consider modifications to 9-1-1 rules**

The Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC) will consider amendments to its rules concerning the provision of emergency 9-1-1 services.

The PUC voted in May to issue a notice of proposed rulemaking and

take comment on a number of proposed changes to its 9-1-1 rules. After publication in the Colorado Register in June, a hearing on the proposed rules is scheduled for July 10 at the PUC.

The PUC is empowered by law to establish standards and prescribe rules for 9-1-1 service in the state. A statewide 9-1-1 task force, created by the PUC in 1992, makes recommendations to the Commission on technical standards and other issues concerning the provision of emergency reporting services.

The proposed rule changes include:

- Reference to wireless telecommunications services as necessary participants concerning the provision of 9-1-1 service, specifically regarding interconnection between wireless providers and local exchange carriers or basic emergency service providers.
- Incorporation by reference of updated National Emergency Number Association technical standards for the provision of 9-1-1 service.
- Allowing the use of the 9-1-1 database for outbound notifications in time of emergencies. For example, an automated call from an emergency agency to residences/businesses in a geographic region threatened by flood, fire, etc.
- Revision of the Colorado PUC reporting requirements for 9-1-1 outages to mirror those of the Federal Communications Commission. The revisions would extend the time that a basic emergency service provider has to report the details of a 9-1-1 outage to PUC staff.
- Recognition of Enhanced 9-1-1 (E-9-1-1) service as falling under the definition of regulated telecommunications services.
- Recognition of the potential for multiple basic emergency service providers within the state.

A copy of the proposed rules is available at the PUC website: [www.dora.puc.state.co.us](http://www.dora.puc.state.co.us). Interested persons may submit written comments to the PUC, 1580 Logan St., OL2, Denver, CO 80204. Comments should be addressed to Docket No. 00R-287T and should be received by July 10.

---

## **New law deregulates directory assistance, private line services**



Rates charged by telecommunications companies for directory assistance are no longer regulated by the Colorado Public Utilities Commission.

A new law approved by the Colorado Legislature and signed by the governor on April 14 removed certain telecommunications services from PUC jurisdiction, including retail directory assistance. The law became effective upon signing.

Customers who call directory assistance to obtain telephone numbers should be aware that companies can now charge whatever they wish for those services. Regulated rates had ranged from 40 cents per call for local numbers to 85 cents per call for national directory assistance.

Previous exemptions – like one free directory assistance call per month, free directory assistance from payphones, and free directory assistance calls for persons with disabilities – may no longer be offered, depending on the company providing the directory assistance.

When calling directory assistance, customers should ask what the rate will be before requesting a number. In some cases, however, customers may not be able to determine the charge for a directory assistance call until they see it on their bill. Customers may want to use directories or on-line number services whenever possible to avoid unknown directory assistance charges.

Most retail private line services, which are point-to-point and point-to-multi-point telecommunications services – such as digital data services, high-speed connections to Internet service providers, and connections from banks to automated teller machines – also were deregulated under the new law.

###

---

## **COLORADO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

1580 Logan Street, Office Level 2

Denver, CO 80203

[CONTACT PUC](#)