



STATE OF COLORADO

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**



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### ***Starting point***

Take a deep breath.

We are about to embark on a year unlike many, if any at all, that I have seen in my time at the Public Utilities Commission. And if all goes as planned, it may be this time next year before we have a chance to exhale.

We may be only a few days into a new year, but several major dockets already are looming on the PUC calendar. These dockets will have significant impact on the future of telecommunications, gas and electric industries in the state of Colorado.

After more than two years of collaborative effort between PUC staff, Qwest and local telephone competitors, the "271 checklist" process is nearing its culmination. This is the process that will determine if Qwest is allowed back into the long distance market in Colorado by demonstration that its local network is irreversibly open to competition.

The PUC has completed a series of extensive workshops, which produced thousands of pages of staff reports; resolved workshop impasse issues; set wholesale prices; and developed a post-271 performance assurance plan. Regional testing of Qwest's operational support systems is scheduled to be completed in the first quarter. Ultimately, this will lead to a recommendation by the PUC to the Federal Communication Commission on whether Qwest has met the federal checklist requirements.

The Commission also is moving forward with a docket to consider reform of its practices and policies concerning intercarrier compensation. This is another important telecommunications docket with significant ramifications for competitive markets in Colorado. A procedural schedule has been established leading to a hearing in early March, with a possible rulemaking proceeding to follow.

Later this spring, the PUC likely will begin hearings on a complete rewrite of its 2,400 pages of rules. This project has been ongoing for quite a while, but I think we're finally ready to push ahead. The overhaul will include both format and substantive changes designed to streamline the rules for the benefit of both the agency and our customers.

Also this spring, Xcel Energy is due to file a combined electric and gas rate case. This will be the first full-blown, combined rate case since 1993, and undoubtedly it will require a major staff effort to review, analyze and intervene in the case.

These are just a few of the known dockets facing us in 2002. I'm sure there are plenty of as-yet unknown ones that will find their way inside the door as well. It appears that 2002 is shaping up to be a blockbuster year at the PUC. And I'm not talking about videos.

### ***Section 271 hearings set for January***

Several key pieces of the Colorado Public Utilities Commission's investigation into the opening of Qwest's local telephone network to competition could be wrapped up in January.

The PUC has scheduled full Commission hearings on Jan. 16-17 to hear presentations from its staff, Qwest and competitive providers on whether Qwest has complied with the requirements of Section 271 of the 1996 Telecommunications Act. The section sets out a 14-point checklist of required competitive elements that must be met before Qwest can receive authority to provide long-distance service within its 14-state region.

The PUC has completed a series of collaborative workshops designed to resolve as many of the competitive issues around the checklist items as possible. Those issues in which consensus could not be reached were decided by a PUC hearing commissioner.

The results of the workshops and the impasse decisions were to be incorporated into Qwest's Statement of Generally Available Terms (SGAT). This is the document that spells out the rates, terms, and conditions under which competitors interact with Qwest when using the Qwest network to provide competitive telecommunications service. Testimony about whether Qwest's filed SGAT complies with the 271 requirements will be presented at the January hearings as well.

The PUC also hopes to have a final Colorado Performance Assurance Plan (CPAP) for Qwest in place by the end of January. The CPAP ensures that Qwest continues to provide fair service to competitors once it obtains long-distance authority by imposing financial penalties for non-compliance.

PUC Hearing Commissioner **Ray Gifford** made final modifications to the proposed CPAP in November. However, Qwest failed to include the CPAP in its SGAT filing. The company said it is still disputing portions of the CPAP and requested a hearing on those issues before the full Commission in January.

The PUC also set aside Jan. 11 for a technical conference to review data from competitors and Qwest about their actual commercial experience in attempting to use the local network for competitive service.

A regional test of Qwest's Operational Support Systems (OSS), being conducted by regulators from 13 Qwest states, including Colorado, is scheduled to be completed in February. The OSS testing measures the effectiveness of the computer interfaces between Qwest and its competitors. Once OSS testing is complete, the PUC will schedule additional hearings to review those results.

Ultimately, the PUC will use the results from the workshops, hearings and testing as the basis for its recommendation to the Federal Communications Commission once Qwest files for long-distance approval.

### ***Training course for regulators comes to PUC***

About 50 staffers from the Public Utilities Commission, the Office of Consumer Counsel and the Attorney General's office took advantage of a unique training opportunity in late October.

The trainees received the benefit of a week-long university course in regulatory issues, condensed to three days, without leaving the building.

The PUC arranged for the Center for Public Utilities at New Mexico State University to present its regulatory training course at the PUC in Denver. Dr. David Smith and Dr. Douglas Gegax, professors at NMSU, focused on the topics of revenue requirement, rate design and other issues in the electric and natural gas industries.

By bringing the New Mexico course to Colorado, the PUC was able to greatly expand access to the training for staff members.

"For the cost of sending five to six people out of state, we were able to train close to 50 people," said **Geri Santos-Rach**, PUC Utilities Chief, who lined up the training course. "It was a very cost-effective use of training dollars."

The PUC has seen a significant influx of new employees over the past few years, due to retirements and other employee turnover. Changes in commissioners and attorneys also have occurred. The training was intended to expand the knowledge and experience of the newer staffers by giving financial analysts, engineers, attorneys, judges and others a broader overall understanding of regulatory issues.

"The response was very good," Santos-Rach said. "From a broad-range perspective, the pieces finally fell into place for some people."

The curriculum presented by the New Mexico State professors, focusing on revenue requirements and rate design in the electric and gas utility industries, was designed with a specific purpose in mind. Xcel Energy will file a general rate case in 2002, the first combined gas and electric rate case since 1993.

### ***PUC adopts 'no-call' rules, chooses vendor***

The Colorado Public Utilities Commission has adopted final rules that will be used to implement a "no-call" program in the state, and hired a vendor who will be responsible for creating and maintaining the program.

The PUC in November approved rules that include an expanded method for filing complaints and the incorporation of an unofficial list of telephone numbers into the official no-call database. The rules are designed to balance the privacy interests of residential telephone subscribers and the commercial interests of telephone solicitors.

The rules, which are expected to be effective by the end of January, include provisions that will require the designated agent who will be in charge of the program to provide a toll-free telephone complaint system in addition to an Internet-based system specified in legislation creating the no-call program. Several groups had expressed concerns that many individuals do not have access to file a complaint electronically.

The PUC also agreed to incorporate into the official no-call database a list from the Bighorn Center for Public Policy, which gathered more than 200,000 telephone numbers of supporters of the legislation. However, the PUC will require that the designated agent verify those numbers on the Bighorn list as a way of deleting stale numbers, numbers inappropriately included, or numbers of subscribers who have changed their minds.

The PUC rejected proposals to limit solicitations by telephone companies of their existing customers, as well as a requirement for telephone companies to include an annual message about the no-call list in their bills to customers. The PUC ruled that it did not have the authority to adopt those provisions.

The Colorado No-Call List Act, adopted earlier this year by the legislature, permits residential telephone subscribers to notify solicitors of their objection to receiving solicitations by telephone or fax. Residential subscribers can place their telephone numbers and zip codes on the Colorado no-call list, and solicitors are required to remove those numbers from their marketing lists. Under the law, solicitors who make three or more calls per month to numbers on the no-call list would violate the Colorado Consumer Protection Act and could be subject to fines.

The PUC has selected e-infodata.com to be the designated agent for the program. The Boulder company will create the telephone and Internet-based sign-up and complaint system. The no-call program will begin no later than July 1.

### ***Colorado PUC joins electric reliability group in West***

*Electric system reliability is a critical goal as the power industry continues to deregulate ...*

The Colorado Public Utilities Commission is now a member of the Western System Coordination Council (WSCC). The WSCC approved the PUC's application for membership at its December board meeting, effective Jan. 1, 2002.

The WSCC is one of 10 electric reliability councils that make up the North American Electric Reliability Council (NERC). Formed in 1967 due to national concern regarding the reliability of the interconnected electric system, WSCC promotes electric system reliability and provides a forum for coordinating system operating and planning activities for its members.

Electric system reliability is a critical goal as the power industry continues to deregulate and companies owning transmission gradually open their systems in support of a competitive electric market.

The PUC has a vested interest in the reliability of the electric system within the state of Colorado and also in factors that may potentially degrade the electric system reliability as the result of unexpected events occurring in other parts of the interconnected system. By joining the WSCC, the PUC can participate in the WSCC meetings to express Colorado's opinions and concerns on regional issues, planning activities and studies that may impact the electric system reliability, according to PUC Engineer **Larry Shiao**.

Membership will also ensure that the PUC receives timely and reliable information from WSCC to grasp system-wide events as they may develop. It is also important for the PUC to be able to participate in WSCC planning studies to ensure a reliable electric system for the future of all Coloradans as competitive markets develop and demand on the limited transmission capacity increases.

Under Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Order 2000-A, all transmission owning entities are required to place their transmission facilities under control of a regional transmission organization (RTO). As a result, the WSCC is expected to soon merge with two regional transmission organizations in the West – the Western Regional Transmission Association and

the Southwestern Regional Transmission Association – to form the Western Electric Coordinating Council (WECC). The new organization, of which the PUC will be a part, will focus on administering the developed reliability system.

### **PUC intervenes in application to form transmission company**

The Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC) has intervened in a federal application by TRANSLink Transmission Company to form an independent transmission company that would span several states from the Upper Midwest to Colorado.

Xcel Energy is one of the participating utilities in the proposed transmission company, which is seeking approval from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Under the plan, Xcel and other participating utilities would transfer ownership or control of transmission facilities to TRANSLink, which would in turn provide transmission service essential to the provision of retail electric service to customers in the affected states.

In its Notice of Intervention and Protest filed with FERC, the Colorado PUC said it “requires additional time to fully examine the proposed transactions, and their consequences upon retail electric consumers in Colorado.”

The Commission has identified several areas of concern with the proposal, including:

- Identification of the specific transmission facilities to be transferred to TRANSLink or controlled by it;
- Whether the proposed transfer of specific facilities meets the FERC’s seven-factor test for these kinds of applications;
- The effect of the TRANSLink filing on subsequent filings to be made to the PUC;
- Whether and how Xcel’s joining of TRANSLink with its Colorado system is consistent with and supportive of the FERC’s policies relating to the formation of regional transmission organizations in the Western region;
- How will Xcel’s joining of TRANSLink affect the cost and operations of Xcel’s system in the West, given that it is the only participant from the Western region;
- The consolidation of control centers and other facilities;
- Accounting changes that may be required in Colorado;
- Whether the filing tends to increase or reduce market disparities within the Western region.
- The governance of TRANSLink.

The Colorado PUC and other affected state commissions have proposed informal meetings with the applicants to clarify these and other issues, followed by the opportunity to present statements of position to FERC.

### ***Inside Connections***

For court reporter **Jim Midyett**, one stint at the Public Utilities Commission just wasn’t enough.

Jim began his professional reporting career by spending five years at the PUC in the late 1970s, and returned to start anew in 1994. In between, he worked in Aspen for a couple of years, moved back to Denver and free-lanced, and then operated his own reporting firm. So what drew him back to the PUC for a second round?

“There are few positions where a reporter encounters such technical and ever-changing work that really affects so many people,” he said.

At the PUC, Jim serves as one of three in-house reporters to the Commissioners and Administrative Law Judges during hearings, and prepares official transcripts of the proceedings as requested by the Commission or its outside customers. During his 25 years as a Certified Shorthand Reporter, Jim has reported or transcribed depositions and proceedings before almost every governmental agency, state and federal courts and the state legislature.

To balance the highly technical and detailed work of a court reporter, Jim spends much of his free time fishing. He is an accomplished fly fisherman and loves to ice fish.

“My favorite fish to eat is walleye, and so I spend most of the warm months chasing those 8-to-10 pound fish,” he said. “It’s been said that I fish too much, but I enjoy teaching people to catch fish almost as much as fishing.”

He also is a member of the Jefferson County Amateur Radio Emergency Service. This is a national organization of ham-radio operators who are dedicated to serving their local communities in the event of emergencies. In Jefferson County, the group’s primary task is to help firefighters communicate with the county, state, or federal agencies during a wildfire, and to provide communication support to the Red Cross.

“We spent countless hours during the Hi Meadow fire last year, and worked with the Red Cross following Sept. 11, assisting airline travelers stranded in Denver,” he said. “It takes a lot of training, but I find it very rewarding.”

Jim and his wife Cindy have seen several of their goals come to fruition in 2001. Their daughter and son both graduated from college in the spring, and their son was married in June. He figures once he and his wife finish redecorating their home, he’ll have time to develop some new goals.

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

### **Qwest pulls ‘omit address’ plan after protests**

A proposal by Qwest to begin charging its customers a monthly fee to omit their addresses from directory listings drew considerable protest before the company ultimately withdrew it.

The company wanted to begin charging a \$1 monthly fee in November to keep customers’ addresses out of the white page directory and directory assistance listings. That service currently is provided at no charge to residential and business customers.

The Public Utilities Commission in October suspended the “omit address” proposal and ordered a hearing to determine if the charge, which also included a one-time set-up fee of \$8.50 for residential customers and \$12 for business customers, was “just and reasonable.”

The PUC said the proposal raised a number of concerns, including whether a monthly recurring charge was reasonable; whether Qwest already is recovering its costs for the white pages directory through basic rates; whether Qwest should be allowed to charge to suppress a customer’s address information, which it does not own; and other privacy and safety concerns for many customers.

Shortly after the proposal was suspended, Qwest voluntarily withdrew it from consideration.

The PUC received more than 900 telephone calls and letters from consumers protesting Qwest's plan. Most consumers had cited privacy and safety concerns in wanting their addresses omitted from directories.

### ***Positive charges***

The PUC's 2001 Colorado Combined Campaign was a success. Campaign coordinators **Deb Fajen** and **Randy Garrouthe** report that about half of the PUC employees contributed to the Colorado Combined Campaign this year and more than \$5,600 will be distributed to the various programs. As a whole, the Department of Regulatory Agencies received pledges for more than \$38,400, making it DORA's best campaign ever. Thanks Deb and Randy for your hard work.

A pat on the back to **John Trogonoski**, **Karl Kunzie**, **Roxi Nielsen** and **Jamie Jack** for their extensive work in the certification of Rural Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers for Federal High-Cost Support.

Congratulations to the Consumer Complaint unit of the External Affairs section for reaching its highest service levels of the year with the fewest abandoned calls during November. The group includes **Judy Dunn**, **Joe Eaglesfether**, **April Woods**, **Theдора Jackson**, **Trudy Reinmuth**, **Harry DiDomenico** and **Doug Platt**.

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### ***711 dialing provides fast relay access***

A new abbreviated number that allows quick access to the Relay Colorado Service is now operational in Colorado, according to Joe Benedetto, Relay Administrator for the Colorado Public Utilities Commission. The new 711 service is easy, secure, free and available 24 hours a day.

Relay Colorado is a telephone service that enables people who are deaf, hard-of-hearing or speech-disabled to communicate on the telephone with a hearing party. Benedetto said with the implementation of 711, all callers can quickly access the Relay Colorado Service without needing to use a 10-digit toll-free number.

Similar to 411 for telephone information or 911 for emergencies, 711 has been designated by the Federal Communications Commission as a national three-digit number for relay access. By reducing the number of digits needed for accessing relay services, nationwide implementation of 711 makes relay access convenient, fast and uncomplicated. All telecommunications carriers nationwide were required by the FCC to implement 711 dialing on Oct. 1, 2001.

“We believe 711 will be very beneficial to people traveling throughout the United States, as well as first-time users who are unsure how to access the relay,” Benedetto said. “It will improve access to Relay Colorado, and encourage and facilitate communication among individuals with hearing or speech disabilities and voice users.”

The Colorado Legislature created the relay program in 1989. Colorado was the second state in the country to provide relay services, which later became mandatory with the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act at the federal level. About 58,000 Colorado relay calls are made each month.

Funding for the program is generated by a 10-cent monthly surcharge on all customers' telephone bills. Sprint Communications has provided the state's relay services since 1990, and is contracted to provide the service through at least 2004.

### ***PUC investigating compensation between telecom providers***

The Colorado Public Utilities Commission is reviewing how telecommunications companies compensate each other for the use of each other's networks to complete calls.

The PUC has established a schedule of testimony and comment to determine if changes in intercarrier compensation policies and practices are appropriate.

Intercarrier compensation refers to charges that one telecommunications provider must pay to another to carry a call across its network. For example, long distance companies pay access charges to local telephone companies to originate or terminate long-distance calls on the local network. Other forms of intercarrier compensation include charges for calls between competing local telephone companies, or calls between local companies and wireless or paging providers.

The current intercarrier compensation policy was designed before the passage of state and federal legislation opening the local telecommunications market to competition. As such, “it is appropriate to review whether Colorado's current intercarrier compensation regime continues to be the most effective policy,” the PUC said in its order setting out a procedural schedule in the docket.

The Commission said it would consider a number of possible alternatives to make intercarrier compensation policy more effective – such as negotiated contracts between companies; statewide or LATA-wide local calling areas; an intrastate subscriber line charge to offset revenues lost through a reduction in access charges; or other proposals advocated by interested parties. To evaluate these alternatives, the Commission is asking parties to submit responses to an extensive array of targeted questions.

The questions are broken into five broad categories – (1) defining the scope of the issues; (2) assessing the impact of legal issues on policy formation in this docket; (3) the submission of company-specific factual information to assist the Commission in designing an effective intercarrier compensation policy; (4) anticipating the practical consequences of various policy alternatives; (5) and responses to the possible alternatives that the Commission might consider.

Written testimony by interested parties is due by Jan. 15. At the same time, PUC staff will prepare a written report summarizing information that has been filed with the PUC or the Federal Communications Commission concerning revenues derived from intercarrier compensation. The report also is to include demand by service offering for both incumbent and new entrant providers.

Parties will be permitted to submit reply comments responding to the testimony of other parties and to the staff report by Feb. 23. A panel discussion style hearing on this matter is scheduled for March 5 at the PUC. Once the investigatory docket is concluded, it might lead to a rulemaking proceeding to implement any changes in intercarrier compensation policy.

### ***PUC judge amends 911 rules to add disclosure requirement***

An administrative law judge of the Public Utilities Commission has recommended adopting proposed rules that require multi-line telephone system operators to disclose to their end-users the proper method of accessing emergency telecommunications (9-1-1) services.

A hearing on the proposed rules was held at the PUC in November.

Many telephone systems used by businesses, apartments, townhome complexes condominiums, schools, hotels, resorts and other entities require end-users to dial an additional digit when accessing the public telephone network. The proposed rules require those system operators to provide written information to each of their end-users describing the proper method of dialing 9-1-1 services in an emergency.

When a multi-line system does not automatically provide a caller's individual telephone number and location to an emergency operator, the proposed rules also require multi-line system operators to advise end-users in writing that the caller must stay on the telephone and give the operator his or her telephone number and exact location.

Under the proposed rules, written notification can be done by placing cards or stickers with the proper method for accessing 9-1-1 services on or next to each telephone. Alternatively, the written notification can be provided to each individual at the time of hiring in the case of an employer, at the time of registration in the case of a school, or at the time of occupancy in the case of a residence facility, and annually thereafter.

The notification requirements would not apply to multi-line telephone systems in jails or correctional facilities, mental health facilities, or privately-contracted community correctional facilities, including substance abuse and mental health treatment facilities, or other such facilities where access to 9-1-1 services is not required.

### ***Gas QSP in effect for Xcel***

A new gas quality of service plan (QSP) for Xcel Energy kicked in at the beginning of the year.

The Colorado Public Utilities Commission in December approved a regulatory plan that will provide annual bill credits to customers if the company's performance falls below standards established by the PUC in two gas categories. The plan, which runs from 2002 through 2007, is similar to one currently in place for the company's electric operations.

The PUC directed the company to develop a gas quality of service plan as part of its approval for the merger of New Century Energies and Northern States Power in 2000. Xcel, PUC staff and the Office of Consumer Counsel reached an agreement on most aspects of the plan, and a hearing was held in November to resolve the remaining issues.

Under the plan, Xcel's gas operations will be measured in two categories – Leak Permanent Repair and Meter Reading Errors. Based on its performance, the company will be at risk for \$1 million in bill credits the first year, up to a maximum of \$3 million in the final year of the plan.

Leak Permanent Repair measures the length of time it takes the company, after it has initially responded to a gas odor complaint, to permanently repair the problem. Meter Reading Errors

measures the number of errors made during manual meter readings by Xcel employees. The Commission declined to include a Gas Odor Response Time measurement in the plan, saying such a measurement was a safety issue and not a quality of service standard.

Xcel will be required to file by April 1 of each year of the plan a report detailing its performance under the gas quality of service plan for the preceding calendar year. PUC staff will review the report by May 1 of each year, and one-time bill credits, if appropriate, would be issued during the July billing cycle.

### ***Lower gas prices lead to reduced bills***

Customers of most of Colorado's regulated natural gas utilities are enjoying significantly reduced monthly bills this heating season compared to last winter, due to large decreases in wholesale gas prices.

Seven of the eight regulated gas utilities in Colorado filed decreases in their gas cost adjustments this fall to reflect lower prices being paid to wholesale gas suppliers. The lower rates became effective in October and November.

Xcel Energy, the state's largest gas utility, which serves about 75 percent of the gas customers in the state, reduced its gas rates by \$571 million on Oct. 1. As a result, customers' average monthly bills were about 43 percent lower in November than they were last February, when gas prices were at their peak.

Absent the company's fixed delivery rates, which include metering, billing and distribution costs, Xcel customers are paying \$0.279 per therm for the natural gas commodity this year, compared to \$0.691 per therm at last year's peak. A therm is a measurement of Btu heat content, with the average monthly usage being about 76 therms in November.

Most of the state's other regulated gas utilities also passed on significant savings in gas costs to customers this fall (*see chart below*). The only exception was ComFurT Gas, which experienced a 20 percent increase in average monthly bills in November. That's because ComFurT had avoided most of last winter's price spike by contracting for its entire heating season gas supply before the run-up in prices.

Gas utilities make gas cost adjustment filings at least on an annual basis to pass through to their customers market fluctuations in the wholesale price of natural gas. Wholesale prices were fully deregulated by the federal government in the early 1990s. Both increases and decreases in the cost of purchasing natural gas are passed along to customers on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The utility does not make any profit from this adjustment.

When a company makes a gas cost adjustment filing, the Public Utilities Commission reviews it initially for informational purposes only. The PUC can order prudency reviews once the actual gas cost information is reported next summer.

## Colorado Gas Utility Rates

UTILITY	Avg. Monthly Usage: Feb. 2001	Total Avg. Mo. Bill: Feb. 2001	Avg. Monthly Usage: Nov. 2001	Total Avg. Mo. Bill: Nov. 2001	% Increase(Decrease) Feb. to Nov. 2001
Citizens: Arkansas Valley	92 Ccf	\$ 85	92 Ccf	\$ 62.24***	(27 %)
Citizens: Western Slope	90 Ccf	\$ 87	90 Ccf	\$ 52.18***	(40 %)
Colo.Natural Gas: Bailey Div	125 Therms	\$124	125 Therms	\$120.25	(3 %)
Colo.Natural Gas: Cripple Creek Div	125 Therms	\$151*	125 Therms	\$126.35	(17 %)
ComFurT Gas, Inc.	10.5 Mcf	\$ 50**	10.097 Mcf	\$ 59.51	20 %
Eastern Colorado Utility Company	78 Ccf	\$ 69	87 Ccf	\$ 53.37	(23 %)
Greeley Gas: NE Colorado	6.4 Mcf	\$ 65	7.2 Mcf	\$ 41.51	(37 %)
Greeley Gas: NW/Central Colorado	7.4 Mcf	\$ 76	7.8 Mcf	\$ 47.42	(37 %)
Greeley Gas: SE Colorado	6.3 Mcf	\$ 71	6.9 Mcf	\$ 53.62	(25 %)
Greeley Gas: SW Colorado	6.7 Mcf	\$ 67	6.9 Mcf	\$ 40.93	(39 %)
KN Energy: North Eastern Rate Area	9.0 Mcf	\$ 74*	9.00 Mcf	\$ 41.79	(44 %)
KN Energy: North Central Rate Area	100 Ccf	\$ 87*	100 Ccf	\$ 44.56	(49 %)
KN Energy: Western Slope Rate Area	100 Ccf	\$ 87*	100 Ccf	\$ 62.31	(29 %)
Peoples Natural Gas Company	9.5 Mcf	\$ 86*	9.0 Mcf	\$ 55.74***	(36 %)
Public Service Co. of Colorado	80 Therms	\$ 78	76 Therms	\$ 44.16***	(43 %)
<p>*Rate Effective 01/01/01      **Rate Effective 10/23/00      *** Rate Effective 10/01/01            ****Please Note: 1 Mcf (1,000 cubic feet) = .10 Ccf (100 cubic feet);Therm is a measurement of Btu heat content****</p>					

### ***Cab companies seek authority for Denver area***

A ruling is expected in February on whether additional taxi service will be authorized for the six-county Denver metro area.

A PUC administrative law judge held consolidated hearings in November and December on applications from both new and existing cab companies to expand taxi service.

Reliable Taxi Cab Associates is seeking authority to provide new taxi service between points in Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Denver, Douglas and Jefferson Counties on one hand, and all points in Colorado, on the other hand. The company testified it wants to put 150 new cabs on the streets.

Freedom Cabs, which already has authority to serve the Denver metro area, is seeking to increase its number of authorized vehicles from 50 to 200. A third application, by Fotgir, Inc., was dismissed when the applicant failed to show for the hearings.

Metro Taxi and Yellow Cab, the other existing cab companies serving the Denver metro area, are disputing the need for additional taxi service.

Under Colorado's "regulated competition" law passed in 1994, a new applicant must show there is a public need for the proposed new service. Once the need has been established by the applicant, the burden shifts to existing carriers. If the existing carriers do not prove that the applicant's entry into the market results in "destructive competition," the new applicant can be granted a certificate to operate.

The entry standard of regulated competition applies only in counties of 60,000 people or more. Taxi service in smaller counties, as well as scheduled and call-and-demand service (such as shuttle or van service), remains governed by the more stringent entry standard of regulated monopoly.

Freedom Cabs and American Cab Company of Denver were the last new taxi companies to be authorized by the PUC to provide service in the Denver area. Both were granted authority for 50 cabs in 1995. American Cabs merged with Metro Taxi in 1999. Metro also acquired Zone Cabs earlier this year.

Currently, Metro is authorized to provide 492 cabs in the Denver area; Yellow Cab is authorized for 300 vehicles; and Freedom is authorized for 50 vehicles.

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