

P-999/CI-89-477 APPROVING SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND ALLOWING TIME
EXTENSION

BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Darrel L. Peterson	Chair
Cynthia A. Kitlinski	Commissioner
Norma McKanna	Commissioner
Robert J. O'Keefe	Commissioner
Patrice Vick	Commissioner

In the Matter of a Petition from the Residential Utilities Division of the Office of the Attorney General for an Investigation into the Restriction of Access to Information Services

ISSUE DATE: August 23, 1990

DOCKET NO. P-999/CI-89-477

ORDER APPROVING SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND ALLOWING TIME EXTENSION

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On June 28, 1989, the Residential Utilities Division of the Office of the Attorney General (RUD-OAG) filed a petition requesting the Commission to investigate the restriction of access to interstate telephone information services. Interstate information services reached through "900" lines have come under criticism because of the possibility of inappropriate use by minors and other vulnerable persons. In its petition, the RUD-OAG urged the Commission to require telephone companies to offer a "900" blocking option to their customers.

On October 23, 1989, the Commission issued its ORDER INITIATING INVESTIGATION AND ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE in the current docket.

On March 19, 1990, the Commission issued its ORDER APPROVING TERMS FOR DISMISSAL AND DISMISSING NORTHWESTERN BELL TELEPHONE COMPANY FROM THE INVESTIGATION AND REQUIRING THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO REPORT ON THE STATUS OF ITS OTHER RELATED NEGOTIATIONS, also in the present docket. In that Order the Commission approved a settlement agreement between RUD-OAG and Northwestern Bell Telephone Company (NWB). Under the terms of the agreement, NWB agreed to provide blocking at no charge where technically feasible, to offer blocking to all customers as it becomes technically feasible, to inform all customers of complaint procedures regarding information services, to refrain from disconnecting local service for nonpayment of interstate information services charges, and to assign the costs of blocking to the local switching rate element (LS2) of its Minnesota access service tariff.

On May 14, 1990, the Commission issued its ORDER APPROVING AND ADOPTING

SETTLEMENTS, REQUIRING STATUS REPORT, AND CLOSING DOCKET in this docket. The Commission approved the proposed settlements of Contel of Minnesota, Inc. (Contel), Centel Telephone Company of Minnesota (Centel), and United Telephone Company of Minnesota (United). The Commission indicated that it would continue to look to the agreement reached in the NWB settlement as the standard against which proposed agreements would be measured. The Commission also required the RUD-OAG to report within 30 days on ongoing negotiations with the remaining local exchange carriers.

On June 13, 1990, the RUD-OAG filed a report indicating that it was close to a settlement on the blocking option with Minnesota Independent Companies (MIC). The RUD-OAG also stated that it had begun negotiating with Mankato Citizens Telephone Company (MCTC).

On July 11, 1990, the RUD-OAG submitted for Commission approval a settlement agreement between MCTC and itself. The Commission met to consider the settlement on July 31, 1990.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Settlement Agreement between RUD-OAG and MCTC

The Commission finds that the proposed RUD-OAG/MCTC agreement for optional "900" blocking is an appropriate means of protection for MCTC customers. The terms of the agreement are in substantial conformity with previous settlements approved for NWB, Contel, United and Centel. The Commission will approve the agreement.

RUD-OAG Negotiations with MIC

In its July 11 filing, the RUD-OAG indicated that it has made substantial progress towards a settlement with MIC on the "900" blocking option. The Commission will allow the RUD-OAG a time extension of 30 days in which to file the status report required under the Commission's May 14 Order.

ORDER

1. The agreement on optional blocking of interstate information services entered into by the Residential Utilities Division of the Office of the Attorney General and Mankato Citizens Telephone Company is hereby approved.
2. Within 30 days of the date of this Order, the Residential Utilities Division of the Office of the Attorney General shall submit a report on the status of its negotiations with Minnesota

Independent Companies.

3. This Order shall become effective immediately.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Richard R. Lancaster
Executive Secretary

(S E A L)