

P-427, 421/CP-85-652 ORDER CERTIFYING POLLING RESULTS AND DIRECTING THE  
INSTALLATION OF EXTENDED AREA SERVICE

BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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Chair  
Commissioner  
Commissioner  
Commissioner  
Commissioner

In the Matter of a Petition for Extended Area  
Service Between Zimmerman and the  
Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan Calling  
Area

ISSUE DATE: March 22, 1994

DOCKET NO. P-427, 421/CP-85-652

ORDER CERTIFYING POLLING RESULTS  
AND DIRECTING THE INSTALLATION OF  
EXTENDED AREA SERVICE

**PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

On March 9, 1993, the Commission issued its ORDER GRANTING PARTIAL RECONSIDERATION, CLARIFYING PRIOR ORDER, SETTING RETURN ON EQUITY, AND REQUIRING FURTHER FILINGS in the above-captioned matter. In that Order, the Commission required Sherburne County Rural Telephone Company (Sherburne or the Company) to route the extended area service (EAS) traffic between Zimmerman and the metropolitan calling area (MCA) in the most efficient and cost effective manner possible. In order to assess relative cost effectiveness, the Commission ordered Sherburne and Bridge Water Telephone Company (Bridge Water) to file cost studies for routing a portion of the EAS traffic across the Monticello exchange. These cost studies were due within 20 days of the date of the Order, or March 29, 1993.

In the March 9, 1993 Order the Commission also required the local exchange companies (LECs), which serve the metropolitan calling area, and Sherburne, which serves the Zimmerman exchange, to file revised cost studies and proposed rates for the proposed Zimmerman/metro EAS route. These cost studies were due 30 days from the date of the Order, or April 8, 1993.

The Commission also ordered the Department of Public Service (the Department) to file its report and recommendations on the cost studies and proposed rates within 60 days of the date of the Order, or by May 10, 1993.

Due to some delay caused by miscommunications, Sherburne and Bridge Water filed their required cost studies on April 2 and April 12, respectively. The final LEC cost studies were filed on April 23, 1993.

On May 7, 1993, the Department filed a letter requesting an additional 30 days in which to file its report and recommendations. The Department explained that the delayed cost study filings rendered it difficult to file a complete report and recommendation within the May 10, 1993 deadline. The Department stated that it was still waiting for answers to information requests sent to two of the telephone companies involved in the proceeding.

On May 19, 1993, the Commission issued an ORDER GRANTING TIME EXTENSION. In this Order, the Commission granted the Department a 30 day time extension, until June 9, 1993, in which to file its report and recommendations.

On June 9, 1993, the Department filed its Report of Investigation and Recommendation.

On June 22, 1993, Sherburne filed comments on the Department's report.

On September 21, 1993, the Commission issued its ORDER ADOPTING RATES FOR POLLING.

On March 8, 1994, the Commission met to consider this matter.

## **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **A. Certification of Results**

Polling of customers in the Zimmerman exchange took place between December 29, 1993 and February 14, 1994. The Commission finds that the polling was properly conducted and recorded. No party alleged irregularities in the process or contested the results.

Of the 1,633 Zimmerman subscribers who returned their polling ballots, 1,013 or 62 percent favored the proposed EAS while 620 or 38 percent opposed it. Based on these results, the Commission finds that the Zimmerman petition has met the third and final criterion established by Minn. Stat. § 237.161, subd. 1 (1992).

### **B. Order for Installation**

Accordingly, pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 237.161, subd. 1 (1992) the Commission will grant the petition and require Sherburne County Rural Telephone Company (SCRTC), the telephone company serving the Zimmerman, and the companies serving the metropolitan calling area exchanges to install EAS between those exchanges.

### **C. Nonrecurring Expenses**

If SCTRC wishes to recover nonrecurring expenses due to the implementation of EAS, it must file a proposal for recovery of those expenses no later than 120 days prior to the planned implementation date of the EAS.

## **ORDER**

1. The polling results for the Zimmerman exchange are certified as set forth in the text of this Order.
2. EAS shall be installed between Zimmerman and the entire Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan calling area. Sherburne County Rural Telephone Company (SCRTC), the

telephone company serving the Zimmerman exchange, shall coordinate implementation of EAS and ensure that EAS is installed within 12 months of the date of the order.

3. Within 60 days of the Order, SCRTC shall file an implementation schedule and update it every 90 days.
4. If SCRTC requests recovery of non-recurring expense, its request must be filed at least 120 days before the planned implementation date. The Minnesota Department of Public Service (the Department) shall have 30 days to comment on the charges.
5. SCRTC shall notify its Zimmerman subscribers of the polling results, the appropriate EAS additives, and the proposed implementation schedule.
6. Within 10 days of the Order, SCRTC shall file a proposed customer notice with Commission staff. The notice shall be a bill insert and shall be included in the earliest possible billing cycle following approval by Commission staff.
7. In addition, GTE, US West, Scott-Rice, Eckles, Vista, SCRTC and United shall send a bill insert to their customers in the billing cycle that concludes one month before the EAS implementation date. This pre-implementation notice shall describe the service, instruct customers on dialing, list the additional rates to be paid, and the date of implementation.

SCRTC's pre-implementation notice to its Zimmerman subscribers shall include information on the lower-priced alternative and clear instructions on how the customer may subscribe to the lower-priced alternative. The notice must also include any deadline the customer will have to meet to have the lower-priced alternative in place by the EAS implementation date.

8. At least 90 days before the implementation date, GTE, US West, Scott-Rice, Eckles, Vista, SCRTC and United shall file with Commission staff their proposed pre-implementation notices described in Ordering Paragraph 8.
9. Thirty days before implementation, GTE, US West, Scott-Rice, Eckles, Vista, SCRTC and United shall file tariff sheets reflecting prior Commission Orders establishing the rates and terms for EAS in each of the exchanges affected by the installation of EAS.
10. This Order shall become effective immediately.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Burl W. Haar  
Executive Secretary

(S E A L)