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NEWS RELEASE

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Only One Week to 10-digit Dialing in Western Kentucky

Area code 364 to be added to area code 270 on February 1

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Jan. 24, 2014) – Only one week remains until the beginning of mandatory 10-digit dialing for local calls in area code 270.

“By now, residents and businesses in area code 270 should be aware of this change and be prepared for it,” Kentucky Public Service Commission Chairman David Armstrong said. “But if you have been putting off updating the automatic dialing in your telephone, computer, fax machine or other telecommunications devices, now is the time to do it.”

Mandatory 10-digit dialing (dialing the area code as well as the seven-digit local number) for local calls begins Feb. 1, when area code 364 is added to the same geographic area as the current area code 270.

Area code 364 was created in December 2012 when the PSC decided that the best way to meet the need for more telephone numbers in area code 270 was through the creation of an overlay, which superimposes a new area code over an existing area code.

“All current area code 270 number will stay the same when the new area code goes into effect,” Armstrong said. “It is just the dialing pattern that is changing.”

The overlay option is the least disruptive for all customers and imposes the smallest cost on businesses in the area, the PSC said in its order creating area code 364. This is the first area code in Kentucky created by an overlay.

Dialing 1 for local calls is not necessary now and will not be necessary after Feb. 1. Local calls will not become long-distance calls.

In its December 2012 order, the PSC noted that public comments received in the case overwhelmingly favored an overlay. The other option was to split area code 270 and designate a portion as area code 364, with both landline and wireless customers in the affected portion required to change their area code as a result.

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Area code overlays have become the preferred method for creating new area codes nationwide. They pose the fewest technical issues for telecommunications providers.

The first numbers using area code 364 may be assigned beginning March 3, 2014. Area code 270 numbers can be assigned after that date, but their availability will depend on how many remain in the inventory of each individual service provider.

Even when area code 364 goes into use, the vast majority of residential and business phone numbers in the area will continue to use area code 270. Only some new customers and those who wish to switch to the new area code will have 364 numbers.

Service providers in area code 270 are required by the PSC to educate their customers about the changes resulting from the new area code.

All records in the area code case are available on the PSC website, psc.ky.gov. The case number is 2012-00129.

The PSC is an independent agency attached for administrative purposes to the Energy and Environment Cabinet. It regulates more than 1,500 gas, water, sewer, electric and telecommunication utilities operating in Kentucky and has approximately 90 employees.

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TEN THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT KENTUCKY'S NEW AREA CODE

1. All current area code 270 numbers remain unchanged. Everyone with a 270 area code number can keep it. Nobody is required to change their area code or phone number.
2. The overlay affects both landline and wireless services.
3. Area code 364 will be overlaid on top of area code 270. That means that area codes 270 and 364 will occupy the same physical space beginning March 2014.
4. In order to distinguish between phone numbers with area code 270 and those with area code 364, 10-digit dialing will be required for all local calls within the overlay.
5. Ten-digit dialing also will be required for local calls into or out of the overlay in those areas that now allow seven-digit local calling across the area code 270 boundary.
6. Ten-digit dialing means dialing the area code before dialing the number itself – for example: 270-555-1212 or 364-555-1212.
7. Long-distance calls within the overlay will require 11-digit (1-plus) dialing, just as long distance calls to other area codes do now.
8. A transition period, known as permissive dialing, began Aug. 3, 2013, and will end Jan. 31, 2014. During that time, local calls can be made using either seven-digit or 10-digit dialing.
9. On Feb. 1, 2014, 10-digit dialing for local calls will become mandatory in the area code 270/364 territory.
10. Numbers with area code 364 may be distributed beginning March 3, 2014. Telecommunication service providers may continue to distribute 270 numbers for as long as they have any remaining in their inventories.