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NEWS RELEASE

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364 WILL BE KENTUCKY'S NEWEST AREA CODE *New number will cover western portion of current area code 270*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (June 13, 2007) – The number 364 has been selected as Kentucky's newest area code. It will cover the western portion of the current area code 270, which includes the cities of Henderson, Hopkinsville, Madisonville, Murray and Paducah.

The Kentucky Public Service Commission (PSC) today received notification of the new number from the North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA), which is responsible for allocating phone numbers to telecommunication providers.

On May 31, the PSC decided to accommodate the rising demand for new telephone numbers in western Kentucky by splitting area code 270, with the eastern portion retaining the current area code. Cities remaining in area code 270 include Bowling Green, Columbia, Glasgow, Elizabethtown and Owensboro.

Mandatory use of the new area code is scheduled to take effect on October 1, 2008. A transition period during which either the new area code or area code 270 may be used in the affected area currently is scheduled to begin by April 1, 2008.

However, the PSC is evaluating the effect of a May 31 order by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that grants Kentucky the authority to change the way in which telephone numbers are allocated by NANPA in the current and future area code 270 and in area code 364. The FCC decision could free up thousands of unused numbers.

“Because of the FCC decision, we are taking another look at the schedule for implementing area code 364,” PSC Chairman Mark David Goss said. “We hope to have a preliminary assessment and response within a few days, but the full effect of the decision may not be known for some time.”

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Area code 364 is currently projected by NANPA to run out of numbers in 23 years. The exhaustion time for the redrawn area code 270 is 13 years. The current area code 270 was established in 1999 and is projected to run out of numbers by late next year.

The number assignment procedure that may now be used in area code 270 is already in place in the Louisville area and in the Kentucky counties of the Cincinnati metropolitan area.

With some exceptions, numbers in those areas are assigned to telecommunication providers in blocks of 1,000, known as NXX-X blocks, rather than blocks of 10,000 known as NXX codes. A company may not need to use all of the numbers in a code or block. The use of the smaller groupings reduces the quantity of numbers that are assigned but unused.

Area code number exhaustion occurs when there are no number blocks remaining to be assigned. Therefore, mandating number allocation in smaller blocks can extend the life of an area code.

Because the process of establishing a new area code takes between 15 and 18 months, the PSC had to act prior to the FCC's decision if the new area code was to be fully functional by the fourth quarter of next year, when it was projected by NANPA that 270 would reach number exhaustion.

“PSC staff will move quickly to evaluate the initial impact of the new number assignment procedure and how it might affect the projected exhaustion date for the current area code 270,” Goss said. “Based on that information, we will then determine whether to adjust any of the implementation dates for area code 364.”

Documents in the area code 270 case can be found on the PSC Web site, which is psc.ky.gov. The case number is 2006-00357.

The PSC is an independent agency attached for administrative purposes to the Department of Public Protection in the Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet. It regulates more than 1,500 gas, water, sewer, electric and telecommunication utilities operating in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and has approximately 110 employees.