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NEWS RELEASE

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PSC DELAYS IMPLEMENTATION OF AREA CODE 364 *New code postponed to assess effects of number reallocation*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (June 15, 2007) – The Kentucky Public Service Commission (PSC) today announced that the optional use of area code 364 will not take effect until July 1, 2008, three months later than originally scheduled.

The date for mandatory use of area code 364 will be determined after the PSC fully assesses how a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) decision regarding the assignment of telephone numbers will affect the lifespan of the present area code 270.

Area code 364 will cover the western portion of the current area code 270, which includes the cities of Henderson, Hopkinsville, Madisonville, Murray and Paducah.

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.

Also on May 31, the FCC granted the PSC's request for a change in the way telephone numbers are allocated to telecommunication providers by the North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA). The FCC decision, which allows the PSC to require a procedure known as "number pooling," could free up thousands of unused telephone numbers.

In an order issued today, the PSC asked all telecommunication providers operating in area code 270 to provide comments on the implementation of the number allocation changes. The PSC said it will mandate number pooling following the comment period.

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The current area code 270 was established in 1999. Because it was projected to run out of numbers by late next year, use of the new area code had been scheduled to become mandatory on October 1, 2008. A transition period during which the 270 and 364 area codes both could be used had been scheduled to begin by April 1, 2008.

In delaying the transition, the PSC said it will set a new deadline for mandatory use of area code 364 after it knows how long the life of area code 270 will be extended by mandatory number pooling. The PSC anticipates that the necessary information will be available in the first quarter of 2008.

Telephone customers whose numbers will eventually change to area code 364 “are advised to begin considering appropriate measures to adequately notify others” that the new area code will take effect on July 1, 2008, the PSC said in today’s order. Similarly, telephone companies should begin educating customers of the change, the PSC said.

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 number assignment procedure that now will 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.

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.