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NEWS RELEASE

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PSC Marks National Lifeline Awareness Week *Program provides phone service for low-income Kentuckians*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Sept. 8, 2014) – As part of a national effort to raise awareness of a program that helps low-income consumers receive telephone service, the Kentucky Public Service Commission (PSC) is reminding Kentuckians to check whether they qualify for the Lifeline subsidy.

Today marks the beginning of National Lifeline Awareness week, a joint effort by the Federal Communications Commission, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners and state utility commissions to increase participation in the program.

“In today’s wired society, a telephone is an essential tool for remaining connected to jobs, health care providers and emergency services, as well as friends and family,” PSC Chairman David Armstrong said. “Economic challenges should not stand as an obstacle to maintaining those vital connections.”

The Lifeline program (not to be confused with the similarly named medical alert program) provides a discount of up to \$12.75 per month on the local service portion of a telephone bill. Lifeline provides discounts only for the primary telephone in a household, whether it is a landline or wireless phone. Households are limited to one phone line receiving the Lifeline subsidy.

Eligibility for Lifeline is linked to participation in or eligibility for other low-income assistance programs, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) or the National Free School Lunch program. Residence in federal public housing/Section 8 or an income at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines also qualifies consumers for lifeline assistance.

“Anyone who thinks that they might be eligible, but who is not participating in Lifeline, should contact their local telephone service provider to see whether they qualify,” Armstrong said.

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Telephone service providers can assist in selecting a service plan and will provide instructions on how to apply for Lifeline support. Lifeline is funded through a small (8 cents per month per line) federally mandated surcharge on all telephone service.

However, not all telephone companies participate in the program. To find a provider or learn more about Lifeline go to www.lifelinesupport.org

The Kentucky Public Service Commission's website also has further information about the Lifeline program at <http://psc.ky.gov/agencies/psc/consumer/lifeline.pdf>.

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 85 employees.

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