

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

AREA CODE EXHAUSTION AND  
RELIEF

) ADMINISTRATIVE  
) CASE NO. 373

O R D E R

A group of telecommunications providers has submitted to the Commission a recommendation for addressing problems associated with the allegedly pending depletion of numbers available for the 502 area code.<sup>1</sup> The industry group asserts that the 502 area code will be depleted by July 1999. It recommends that the 502 area code be split along the boundary line between the Owensboro LATA and the Louisville LATA, and that the Louisville LATA retain the 502 area code. The Owensboro LATA would receive the new area code.

In order to address the alleged need for a new area code in Kentucky, and alternatives to implement the new area code, if needed, the Commission institutes this proceeding and schedules an informal conference. In addition to the industry's proposed solution, and any other options that may be proposed, the Commission expects persons at the informal conference to be prepared to discuss the merits of the following alternatives:

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<sup>1</sup> The group providing this request consists of BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc.; ALLTEL Kentucky, Inc.; Brandenburg Telephone Company, Inc.; Duo County Telephone Cooperative Corporation, Inc.; GTE South Incorporated; North Central Telephone Cooperative, Inc.; BellSouth Cellular Corporation; ICG Telecom Group, Inc.; Sprint Spectrum, L.P. d/b/a Sprint PCS; and AT&T Communications of the South Central States, Inc.

1. Assigning a new area code to all of the existing 502 area except for the Kentucky area encompassed by the Louisville Metropolitan Statistical Area ("Louisville MSA"), an option that appears to have the advantage of potentially postponing a future new area code that would split the Louisville MSA.

2. Assigning a new area code to all existing and future wireless services, an option that appears to have the advantage not only of avoiding a new generally applicable area code, but also of providing a distinctive area code to all wireless services.

3. Rather than assigning a new area code to existing subscribers, utilizing the overlay method, wherein only new subscribers in the area would be assigned a new area code, an option that appears to be least disruptive to existing customers.

4. Recapturing, if possible, a portion of the unused numbers which have been assigned to competitive local exchange carriers, wireless carriers, paging companies, and others. With proper management, it may not be necessary to assign additional area codes at this time.

The Commission has received protests regarding the area code split and its impact on western Kentucky. Those filing protests include Representative Ron Lewis, who has written to express concern about the division of several counties in his district; the Greensburg-Green County Chamber of Commerce; the Green County Extension Office; and a resident of Green County.

South Central Rural Telephone Cooperative ("South Central Rural") also has objected to the proposed recommendation for area code relief because its existing

extended local calling areas will be affected by the proposal. South Central Rural requests that all of its 16 exchanges remain in the 502 area code.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that:

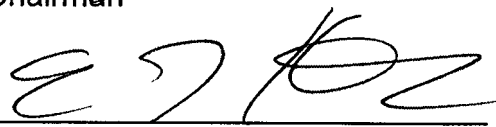
1. There shall be an informal conference on May 20, 1998 at 10:00 a.m., Eastern Daylight Time, in Hearing Room 1 of the Commission's offices at 730 Schenkel Lane, Frankfort, Kentucky to discuss area code relief and the options set forth in this Order.

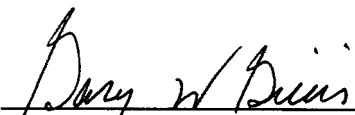
2. All members of the industry group, as well as those persons who have protested the proposed area code relief plan, are made parties to this proceeding and shall receive a copy of this Order.

Done at Frankfort, Kentucky, this 17th day of April, 1998.

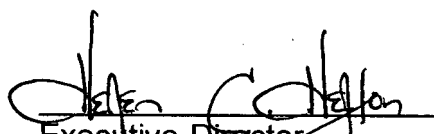
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

  
Chairman

  
Vice Chairman

  
Commissioner

ATTEST:

  
Executive Director