

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

On October 23, 1998, the Commission stayed its Order to overlay the 502 area code region with a new area code, pending consideration of public comments. The Commission conducted public meetings in Bowling Green, Louisville, Owensboro, and Paducah. Customers, local officials, business representatives, and others presented their views regarding ten-digit local dialing, which is necessary for an overlay of a new area code.

Background

On August 18, 1998, the Commission ordered a numbering plan area ("NPA") overlay for the 502 area code region of Kentucky to address the depletion of available telephone numbers in that region. Two viable options were considered by the Commission: one was a new area code through a geographic split, and the other was an overlay of the entire 502 area code region with a new area code. The Commission selected the latter because no subscribers would have to change their phone numbers, future relief would be much less disruptive since additional overlay area codes could be readily assigned, and the overlay assisted in the accomplishment of one of the goals of the Federal Communications Commission as it implements the Telecommunications Act of 1996. This goal is "location number portability" and it enables persons to keep their

same telephone numbers even when they move from location to location. It requires ten-digit local dialing.

Each area code can hold in theory about eight million telephone numbers and yet area codes split and then split again, in many cases, into regions with populations well under one million people. The reasons most often given for the depletion of new area codes is the explosion in the use of new technologies such as facsimiles, Internet, and wireless services, as well as additional lines by customers. However, another large culprit is the inefficient allocation of numbers with the numbering plan.

When local telephone service opens to competition in a city, including wireless carriers, each new competing carrier must have numbers available in each rate center it wishes to serve. Under the current system, that means it must be assigned an entire block of 10,000 numbers for each rate center in the territory it serves. The problem is that the numbering structure was not designed to accommodate that competition.

The solution is local number portability ("LNP"), which is defined by the Telecommunications Act of 1996 as the ability of users of telecommunication services to retain, at the same location, their existing telephone number when switching from one carrier to another. This is a process that unlinks that prefix in a number from a specific carrier. Through LNP it would be possible for a carrier to hold a block of less than 10,000 numbers thereby allowing number sharing and pooling. For example, blocks of 1000 numbers could be allocated to carriers. This would allow a much more efficient allocation of the numbers that are available. The Commission intends to pursue implementation of all means of efficient number allocation.

Local number portability for the Louisville Metropolitan Service Area ("MSA") will be implemented by the end of November 1998. Local number portability for the remaining portion of Kentucky will be implemented based upon requests by competitive telephone carriers.

Decision

A month after the Commission's decision to require an overlay for the 502 area code region, the North American Numbering Plan Administrator, Lockheed Martin, submitted a request for area code relief in the 606 area code region on behalf of the telecommunications industry in Kentucky. The Commission is reviewing the 606 area code relief application. The Commission believes that the entire state of Kentucky should utilize the same dialing pattern to reduce confusion.

The Commission is reviewing the 606 area code relief application in light of its decision for the 502 area code region. Based upon several factors, the Commission has determined that its decision for the 502 area code region should be amended. The Commission believes that the entire state of Kentucky should utilize the same dialing pattern to reduce confusion. The 606 area code region does not have the same projected growth of local telephone competition or telephone usage as those projected for the 502 area code region and, thus, the overlay option is less desirable. Telephone number allocation and conservation are becoming more available, as noted above.

Moreover, the FCC recently decided to delay implementation of location number portability for an indefinite period of time.¹

Finally, the Commission is amending its initial decision concerning the 502 area code due to customer protests regarding ten-digit local dialing. Persons commenting at the public meetings overwhelmingly supported a geographic split. For example, many business representatives noted resource limitations and the difficulty of implementing system modifications needed for ten-digit local dialing.

Because the 502 area code numbers are depleting so rapidly in the Louisville area, the Commission selects herein the boundary line for the new area code in the current 502 area code region. Louisville and some of the area surrounding it will retain the 502 area code, and the 270 area code will be assigned to the rest of the 502 area code region. The serving area of BellSouth and ALLTEL from Louisville to the current 502/606 boundary line in the central portion of the state will retain the 502 number. The area code boundary will now follow the service area boundary between BellSouth and that of Brandenburg Telephone Company, GTE South Incorporated, and South Central Rural Telephone Cooperative Corporation. Thus, the telephone exchanges of North Garrett, Radcliffe, Elizabethtown, Hodgenville, Buffalo, Lebanon, and Loretto will form the northern boundary of the 270 area code region. The map, which is attached hereto as Appendix A, depicts Kentucky area code boundaries. The new 502 area code region is highlighted in the map which is attached hereto as Appendix B.

¹ The FCC recently stated that it "has no current plans to address location portability at this time." In the Matter of Telephone Number Portability, Second Memorandum Opinion and Order on Reconsideration, CC Docket No. 95-116, October 20, 1998, at ¶ 30.

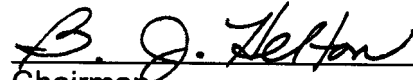
The implementation of area code relief will be delayed because of the Commission's revised decision. However, it should proceed as quickly as possible. Local exchange carriers shall provide seven-digit dialing across NPA boundaries for existing local calling plans. A six-month permissive dialing period must be provided. The consumer education plans of the local exchange carriers must be submitted again.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that:

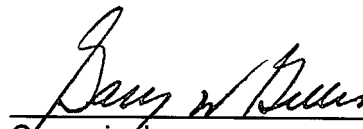
1. The methodology for area code relief in Kentucky shall be by geographical split.
2. The 502 area code region shall be split along the boundary described herein and displayed on the map appended hereto and incorporated herein.
3. Local exchange carriers shall provide seven-digit dialing across NPA boundaries for existing local calling plans.
4. Within 15 days of the date of this Order, local exchange carriers shall advise the Commission of the time required to implement the geographic split described herein, including a six-month permissive dialing period.
5. Within 15 days of the date of this Order, local exchange carriers shall resubmit their customer education plans for Commission review.

Done at Frankfort, Kentucky, this 16th day of November, 1998.

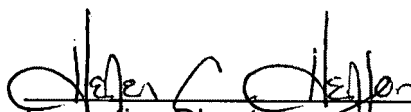
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION


Chairman


Vice Chairman

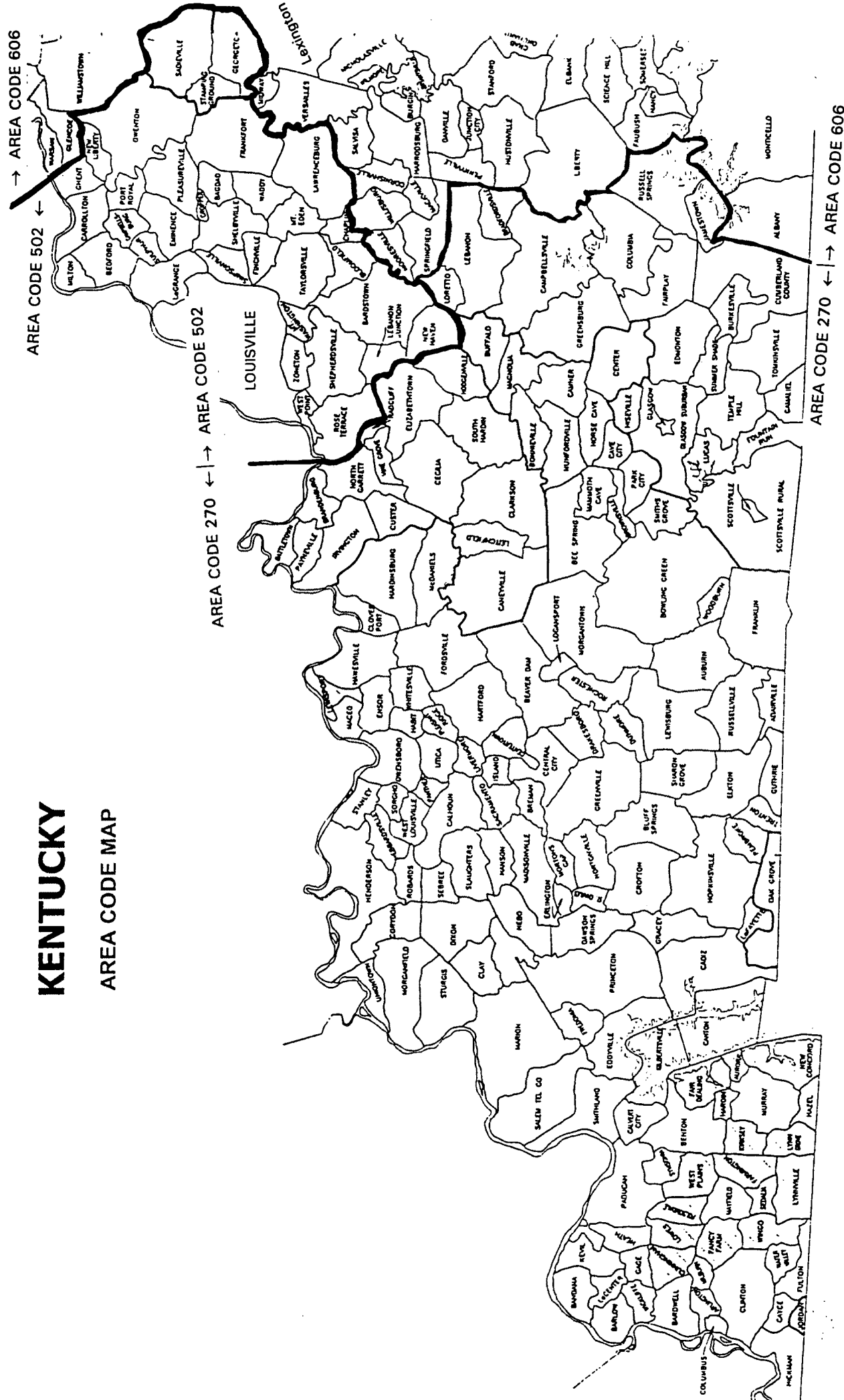

Commissioner

ATTEST:


Executive Director

KENTUCKY

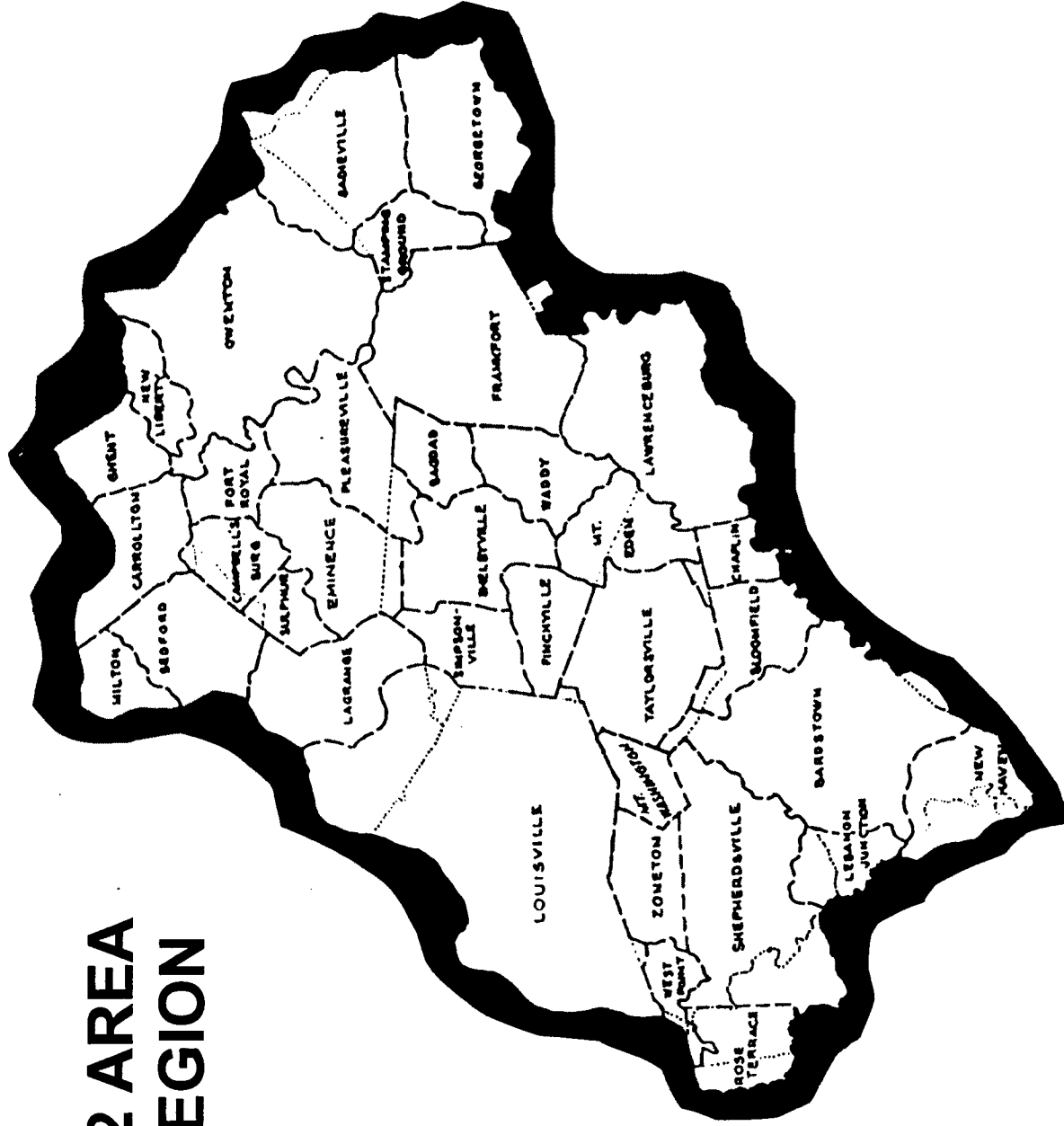
AREA CODE MAP



APPENDIX A

APPENDIX TO AN ORDER OF THE
 KENTUCKY PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
 IN ADMINISTRATIVE CASE NO. 373 DATED NOVEMBER 16, 1998

NEW 502 AREA CODE REGION



APPENDIX B

APPENDIX TO AN ORDER OF THE
KENTUCKY PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
IN ADMINISTRATIVE CASE NO. 373 DATED NOVEMBER 16, 1998