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NEWS RELEASE

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PSC POSTPONES START DATE FOR AREA CODE 364 TO APRIL 2010 *Number reallocation extends lifespan of area code 270*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (March 31, 2008) – Measures taken to extend the lifespan of area code 270 have worked as expected, allowing another postponement in the starting date for area code 364 in far western Kentucky, the Kentucky Public Service Commission (PSC) said today.

The optional use of area code 364 will now take effect on April 1, 2010, 15 months later than previously announced.

In delaying the transition, the PSC said it will set a new deadline for mandatory use of area code 364 after further assessment of the effect of a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) decision regarding the assignment of telephone numbers in the present area code 270.

That decision “could result in further delaying the need” to implement area code 364, the PSC said in an order issued today.

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.

“The PSC recognizes that these postponements may have created some confusion in the affected communities,” Chairman Mark David Goss said. “But it is preferable to move the start date out rather than impose the costs of a transition before it is absolutely necessary.”

On May 31, 2007, 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.

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Also on May 31, 2007, the FCC granted the PSC's request for a change in the way in which telephone numbers are allocated to telecommunication providers by the North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA). The FCC decision allowed the PSC to require a procedure known as "number pooling," was expected to free up thousands of unused telephone numbers.

Several hundred thousand numbers have in fact been made available since number pooling began on Nov. 30, 2007, allowing further postponement of the need to begin the use of area code 364.

The current area code 270 was established in 1999. In 2006, NANPA had projected area code 270 would run out of numbers by late this year.

NANPA now projects that area code 270 will reach number exhaustion by the third quarter of 2010.

The need for new numbers has been driven by rapid growth in the area and the proliferation of cellular phones and other wireless devices, each of which requires a new phone number. Demand for new numbers appears to have slowed in recent months.

Area code number exhaustion occurs when there are no blocks of numbers available for assignment to telecommunication providers. Allocating numbers in smaller blocks can extend the life of an area code.

Prior to number pooling, most numbers in area code 270 were assigned in blocks of 10,000 known as NXX codes. Under number pooling, most numbers areas now are assigned to telecommunication providers in blocks of 1,000, known as NXX-X blocks. Because 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.

The number pooling directive required companies to relinquish any unused 1,000-number blocks. Several hundred such blocks have been made available for reassignment.

Today's action marks the third delay in the start date for area code 364. The original start date next month had earlier been postponed to July 1, 2008, and then to Jan. 1, 2009, as NANPA revised its projections.

Upon implementation, area code 364 is projected by NANPA to run out of numbers in 23 years. The projected exhaustion time for the redrawn area code 270 is 13 years.

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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.

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