

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

AN INQUIRY INTO THE STATE UNIVERSAL )      CASE NO.  
SERVICE FUND )      2016-00059

ORDER

On July 10, 2020, the Commission issued an Order in this proceeding increasing the monthly Kentucky Universal Service Fund (KUSF) Lifeline support per customer from \$3.50 to \$8.00 for Eligible Telecommunications Carriers (ETC) that certified that they would offer unlimited voice service. The July 10, 2020 Order stated that, according to the Commission's calculations, the KUSF could sustain the increased payment for approximately a year from August 1, 2020, through July 31, 2021.<sup>1</sup> The July 10, 2020 Order also stated that the Commission would institute a formal review of the impact of the increased payments no later than March 1, 2021.<sup>2</sup>

The Commission, in response to a KUSF shortfall calculated to occur prior to July 31, 2021, on January 22, 2021, increased the monthly per customer surcharge assessed to support the KUSF from \$.07 to \$.15. The increased surcharge, which is at its highest level since the KUSF was established over two decades ago, was necessary to sustain the KUSF through July 31, 2020.

The Commission, pursuant to the July 10, 2020 Order, has completed its review of the impact of the increased payment on the KUSF and has determined that the KUSF,

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<sup>1</sup> Order (Ky. PSC July 10, 2020) at 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

despite the increase in the surcharge to maintain the KUSF, cannot sustain the increased payments for unlimited voice service. This inability is due in large part to a substantial increase in Lifeline customers who are receiving unlimited voice service. Since the Commission increased the amount of the KUSF support, some ETCs that previously elected to not receive KUSF support opted to receive such support, leading to an unanticipated strain on the KUSF.<sup>3</sup> This, an influx of carriers requesting ETC designation due to participation in the Federal Communications Commission's Rural Development Opportunity Fund, and the Commission's reluctance to increase the KUSF surcharge, leads the Commission to find that KUSF support for ETCs that offer unlimited voice service should be reduced from \$8.00 to \$6.00 effective for service offered on and after May 1, 2021. ETCs that previously certified to the Commission that they offer unlimited voice service who no longer wish to provide unlimited voice service and receive the increased KUSF support should notify the Commission in writing and file the notice in this proceeding.

Based upon the foregoing, IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that:

1. Beginning May 1, 2021, the payment from the KUSF shall be decreased to \$6.00 per month per Lifeline customer for ETCs that provide unlimited voice service in Kentucky.
2. ETCs that currently provide unlimited voice service, and no longer wish to provide unlimited voice service, shall notify the Commission in writing of the ETC's intent to no longer provide unlimited voice service.

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<sup>3</sup> See *e.g.*, TracFone Wireless Inc. Notice of Intent to Provide Unlimited Voice Service (filed Sept. 30, 2020).

3. No later than February 1, 2022, the Commission shall initiate a formal review of the solvency of the KUSF.

4. Nothing contained in this Order shall prohibit the Commission from issuing further Orders in this matter.

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By the Commission



ATTEST:

  
Executive Director

Case No. 2016-00059

JM Steinhart  
Law Offices of Lance J.M. Steinhart  
6455 East Johns Crossing, Suite 285  
Duluth, GEORGIA 30155

\*Flatel Wireless, Inc dba Zing PCS  
Flatel Wireless, Inc dba Zing PCS  
9601 Worswick Court  
Wellington, FL 33414

\*UnityComm, LLC  
UnityComm, LLC  
101 E Main Street  
P. O. Box 250  
Syracuse, IN 46567

NET TALK.COM, INC.  
NET TALK.COM, INC.  
1100 NW 163rd Drive, Suite 3  
North Miami Beach, FL 33169

\*Thacker-Grigsby Telephone Company, I  
Thacker-Grigsby Telephone Company,  
60 Communications Lane  
P. O. Box 789  
Hindman, KY 41822

\*Brad Thomas  
South Central Rural Telecommunications  
1399 Happy Valley Road  
P. O. Box 159  
Glasgow, KY 42141

\*Cincinnati Bell Telephone Company LL  
Cincinnati Bell Telephone Company LLC  
221 E Fourth Street, Room 103-1080  
Cincinnati, OH 45201-2301

\*Thacker-Grigsby Telephone Company, I  
Thacker-Grigsby Telephone Company,  
60 Communications Lane  
P. O. Box 789  
Hindman, KY 41822

\*CityNet Kentucky, LLC  
CityNet Kentucky, LLC  
3600 University Avenue  
Morgantown, WV 26505

\*Alexander Statsky  
Telrite Corporation  
4113 Monticello Street  
Covington, GA 30014

\*IBFA Acquisition Company, LLC  
IBFA Acquisition Company, LLC  
353 Sacramento Street  
Suite 1500  
San Francisco, CA 94111

\*Simple Signal, Inc.  
Simple Signal, Inc.  
34232 Pacific Coast Highway  
Suite E  
Dana Point, CA 92629

\*L Allyson Honaker  
Goss Samford, PLLC  
2365 Harrodsburg Road, Suite B325  
Lexington, KENTUCKY 40504

\*Armstrong Telecommunications, Inc.  
Armstrong Telecommunications, Inc.  
One Armstrong Place  
Butler, PA 16001

\*R. Brooks Herrick  
Dinsmore & Shohl, LLP  
101 South Fifth Street  
Suite 2500  
Louisville, KENTUCKY 40202

\*MCC Telephony of the South, LLC d/b/a  
MCC Telephony of the South, LLC d/b/a  
One Mediacom Way  
Mediacom Park, NY 10918

\*Tempo Telecom, LLC  
Tempo Telecom, LLC  
3060 Peachtree Road NW, Suite 1065  
Atlanta, GA 30305

\*Leslie County Telephone Company, Inc  
Leslie County Telephone Company, Inc.  
24014 Highway 421  
P. O. Box 969  
Hyden, KY 41749

\*Pix Wireless, LLC  
Pix Wireless, LLC  
21346 Saint Andrews Blvd, Suite 225  
Boca Raton, FL 33433

\*Tempo Telecom, LLC  
Tempo Telecom, LLC  
3060 Peachtree Road NW, Suite 1065  
Atlanta, GA 30305

\*Lewisport Telephone Company, Inc.  
Lewisport Telephone Company, Inc.  
30 Pell Street  
Lewisport, KY 42351

\*Salem Telephone Company  
Salem Telephone Company  
221 East Main Street  
P. O. Box 25  
Salem, KY 42078-0025

\*KDDI America, Inc.  
KDDI America, Inc.  
7 Teleport Drive  
Staten Island, NY 10311

\*Honorable Douglas F Brent  
Attorney at Law  
Stoll Keenon Ogden, PLLC  
2000 PNC Plaza  
500 W Jefferson Street  
Louisville, KENTUCKY 40202-2828

\*Brandenburg Telecom, LLC  
Brandenburg Telecom, LLC  
200 Telco Drive  
Brandenburg, KY 40108

\*Cheryl Winn  
Waters Law Group, PLLC  
12802 Townepark Way, Suite 200  
Louisville, KENTUCKY 40243

\*Blue Jay Wireless, LLC  
Blue Jay Wireless, LLC  
4240 International Pkwy, Suite 140  
Carrollton, TX 75007

\*Brandenburg Telephone Company, Inc.  
Brandenburg Telephone Company, Inc.  
200 Telco Road  
P. O. Box 599  
Brandenburg, KY 40108

\*Highland Telephone Cooperative, Inc.  
Highland Telephone Cooperative, Inc.  
7840 Morgan County Highway  
P. O. Box 119  
Sunbright, TN 37872

\*Globalstar USA, LLC  
Globalstar USA, LLC  
300 Holiday Square Blvd  
Covington, LA 70433

\*Cindy D McCarty  
Staff Attorney  
East Kentucky Network, LLC dba Appalachian  
101 Technology Trail  
Ivel, KY 41642

\*David S Samford  
Goss Samford, PLLC  
2365 Harrodsburg Road, Suite B325  
Lexington, KENTUCKY 40504

\*Eric Schimpf  
Global Connection Inc. of America  
842 Monmouth Street  
Newport, KY 41071

\*Telecommunication Properties, Inc.  
Telecommunication Properties, Inc.  
3030 Warrenville Road, Suite 340  
Lisle, IL 60532

\*Cumberland Cellular, LLC dba Duo Bro  
Cumberland Cellular, LLC dba Duo Broadband  
2150 N Main Street  
P. O. Box 80  
Jamestown, KY 41269

\*Logan Telephone Cooperative, Inc. db  
Logan Telephone Cooperative, Inc. dba LTC  
10725 Bowling Green Road  
P. O. Box 97  
Auburn, KY 42206

\*ExteNet Systems, Inc.  
ExteNet Systems, Inc.  
3030 Warrenville Road, Suite 340  
Lisle, IL 60532

\*Douglas E Hart  
441 Vine Street, Suite 4192  
Cincinnati, OHIO 45202

\*Patriot Mobile LLC  
Patriot Mobile LLC  
3341 Regent Blvd, Suite 130-352  
Irving, TX 75063

\*Velocity, A Managed Services Company  
Velocity, A Managed Services Company, Inc.  
7130 Spring Meadows Drive West  
Holland, OH 43528

\*AmeriMex Communications Corp. dba SafetyNet  
AmeriMex Communications Corp. dba SafetyNet  
2323 Curlew Road, Suite 7B  
Dunedin, FL 34698

\*Cumberland Cellular Partnership d/b/a Bluegrass  
Cumberland Cellular Partnership d/b/a Bluegrass  
2902 Ring Road  
P. O. Box 5012  
Elizabethtown, KY 42701

\*Kentucky RSA #3 Cellular General Partnership,  
Kentucky RSA #3 Cellular General Partnership,  
2902 Ring Road  
P. O. Box 5012  
Elizabethtown, KY 42701

\*BellSouth Telecommunications, LLC db  
BellSouth Telecommunications, LLC dba AT&T  
Meidinger Tower  
462 S 4th Street, Suite 2400  
Louisville, KY 40202

\*MCImetro Access Transmission Service d/b/a  
MCImetro Access Transmission Services Corp.  
600 Hidden Ridge  
Irving, TX 75038

\*Kentucky RSA #4 Cellular General Partnership,  
Kentucky RSA #4 Cellular General Partnership,  
2902 Ring Road  
P. O. Box 5012  
Elizabethtown, KY 42701

\*AT&T Corp.  
AT&T Corp.  
Meidinger Tower  
462 S 4th Street, Suite 2400  
Louisville, KY 40202

\*Air Voice Wireless, LLC  
Air Voice Wireless, LLC  
2425 Franklin Road  
Bloomfield Hill, MI 48302

\*Bluegrass Wireless, LLC  
Bluegrass Wireless, LLC  
2902 Ring Road  
P. O. Box 5012  
Elizabethtown, KY 42701

\*Teleport Communications America, LLC  
Teleport Communications America, LLC  
Meidinger Tower  
462 S 4th Street, Suite 2400  
Louisville, KY 40202

\*QuantumShift Communications, Inc. dba vCom  
QuantumShift Communications, Inc. dba vCom  
12657 Alcosta Blvd, Suite 418  
San Ramon, CA 94583

\*NetDiverse, LLC  
NetDiverse, LLC  
825 North 300 West, Suite C-149  
Salt Lake City, UT 84103

\*BellSouth Long Distance, Inc. dba AT  
BellSouth Long Distance, Inc. dba AT&T Long  
462 S 4th Street, Suite 2400  
Louisville, KY 40202

\*Inter-Mountain Cable, Inc. dba MTS C  
Inter-Mountain Cable, Inc. dba MTS  
20 Laynesville Road  
P. O. Box 160  
Harold, KY 41635

\*BellSouth Telecommunications, LLC db  
BellSouth Telecommunications, LLC dba AT&T  
Meidinger Tower  
462 S 4th Street, Suite 2400  
Louisville, KY 40202

\*Image Access, Inc. dba NewPhone  
Image Access, Inc. dba NewPhone  
7324 Southwest Freeway, Suite 475  
Houston, TX 77074

\*Gearheart Communications Company, In dba  
Gearheart Communications Company, Inc. dba  
20 Laynesville Road  
Harold, KY 41635

\*Cricket Wireless, LLC  
Cricket Wireless, LLC  
1010 N St Mary's Street, 9th Floor  
San Antonio, TX 78215

\*Calla Dunlap  
1725 Windward Concourse, Suite 150  
Alpharetta, GEORGIA 30005

\*e-Tel, LLC dba e-Tel/Murray, LLC  
e-Tel, LLC dba e-Tel/Murray, LLC  
1515 Broadway  
Paducah, KY 42001

\*New Cingular Wireless PCS, LLC dba A  
New Cingular Wireless PCS, LLC dba AT&T  
1010 N St Mary's Street, 9th Floor  
San Antonio, TX 78215

\*Jack W. Pruitte dba First Phone  
Jack W. Pruitte dba First Phone  
3281-C Fort Campbell Blvd  
P. O. Box 504  
Clarksville, TN 37042

\*South Central Telcom, LLC  
South Central Telcom, LLC  
1399 Happy Valley Road  
P. O. Box 159  
Glasgow, KY 42142-0159

\*South Central Rural Telecommunicatio  
South Central Rural Telecommunications  
1399 Happy Valley Road  
P. O. Box 159  
Glasgow, KY 42142

\*John E Selent  
Dinsmore & Shohl, LLP  
101 South Fifth Street  
Suite 2500  
Louisville, KENTUCKY 40202

\*T.V. Service, Incorporated  
T.V. Service, Incorporated  
2742 Hwy 550 E  
Hindman, KY 41822

\*Wireless Telecom Cooperative, Inc. d  
Wireless Telecom Cooperative, Inc. dba  
2317 West Chestnut Street  
Louisville, KY 40211

\*North Central Telephone Cooperative,  
North Central Telephone Cooperative, Inc.  
872 Highway 52 By-Pass E  
P. O. Box 70  
Lafayette, TN 37083-0070

\*Ballard Rural Telephone Cooperative  
Ballard Rural Telephone Cooperative Corporation,  
159 W 2nd Street  
P. O. Box 209  
La Center, KY 42056-0209

\*Wireless Telecom Cooperative, Inc. d  
Wireless Telecom Cooperative, Inc. dba  
2317 West Chestnut Street  
Louisville, KY 40211

\*North Central Communications, Inc.  
North Central Communications, Inc.  
872 Highway 52 By-Pass E  
P. O. Box 70  
Lafayette, TN 37083

\*Kathryn A Eckert  
McBrayer PLLC  
201 East Main Street  
Suite 900  
Lexington, KENTUCKY 40507

\*Communications Venture Corporation d/b/a  
Communications Venture Corporation d/b/a  
1616 Directors Row  
Fort Wayne, IN 46808

\*SpeedBeam Lexington, LLC  
SpeedBeam Lexington, LLC  
3070 Lakecrest Circle  
Lexington, KY 40513

\*Peoples Rural Telephone Cooperative  
Peoples Rural Telephone Cooperative  
Highway 421 South  
P. O. Box 159  
McKee, KY 40447

\*France Telecom Corporate Solutions L  
France Telecom Corporate Solutions L.L.C.  
13865 Sunrise Valley Drive  
Coppermine Commons Building #2, Suite 425  
Herndon, VA 20171

\*Timberline Specialized Management, L  
Timberline Specialized Management, LLC  
5271 Memorial Drive, Suite 200  
Houston, TX 77007

\*Peoples Telecom, LLC  
Peoples Telecom, LLC  
259 Main Street  
P. O. Box 159  
McKee, KY 40447

\*France Telecom Corporate Solutions L  
France Telecom Corporate Solutions L.L.C.  
13865 Sunrise Valley Drive  
Coppermine Commons Building #2, Suite 425  
Herndon, VA 20171

\*Julie Skipworth  
South Central Rural Telecommunications  
1399 Happy Valley Road  
P. O. Box 159  
Glasgow, KY 42141

\*Telrite Corporation  
Telrite Corporation  
4113 Monticello Street  
Covington, GA 30014

\*Bluegrass Telephone Company, Inc. dba  
Bluegrass Telephone Company, Inc. dba  
101 Mill Street  
Leitchfield, KY 42754

\*Justin M. McNeil  
Office of the Attorney General Office of Rate  
700 Capitol Avenue  
Suite 20  
Frankfort, KENTUCKY 40601-8204

\*Telrite Corporation  
Telrite Corporation  
4113 Monticello Street  
Covington, GA 30014



\*West Kentucky Rural Telephone Cooper dba  
West Kentucky Rural Telephone Cooperative  
100 WK&T Technology Drive  
P. O. Box 649  
Mayfield, KY 42066-0649

\*Budget Prepay, Inc. dba Budget Phone  
Budget Prepay, Inc. dba Budget Phone  
1325 Barksdale Blvd, Suite 200  
Bossier City, LA 71111

\*Luke Morgan  
McBrayer PLLC  
201 East Main Street  
Suite 900  
Lexington, KENTUCKY 40507

\*BCN Telecom, Inc.  
BCN Telecom, Inc.  
1200 Mt. Kemble Ave, 3rd Floor  
Morristown, NJ 07960

\*Budget PrePay, Inc. dba Budget Mobil  
Budget PrePay, Inc. dba Budget Mobile  
1325 Barksdale Blvd, Suite 200  
Bossier City, LA 71111

\*Honorable Lance Steinhart  
Attorney At Law  
1725 Windward Concourse  
Suite 150  
Alpharetta, GEORGIA 30005

\*BCN Telecom, Inc.  
BCN Telecom, Inc.  
1200 Mt. Kemble Ave, 3rd Floor  
Morristown, NJ 07960

\*Ready Wireless, LLC  
Ready Wireless, LLC  
955 Kacena Road, Suite A  
Hiawatha, IA 52233

\*TAG Mobile, LLC  
TAG Mobile, LLC  
701 East Plano Parkway  
Suite 408  
Plano, TX 75074

\*Eastern Telephone & Technologies  
Eastern Telephone & Technologies  
106 Power Drive  
Pikeville, KY 41501

\*Larry Cook  
Assistant Attorney General  
Office of the Attorney General Office of Rate  
700 Capitol Avenue  
Suite 20  
Frankfort, KENTUCKY 40601-8204

\*CampusSims, Inc.  
CampusSims, Inc.  
361 Newbury Street, 5th Floor  
Boston, MA 02115

\*The People's Operator USA, LLC  
The People's Operator USA, LLC  
915 Broadway, Suite 1306  
New York, NY 10010

\*ATC Outdoor DAS, LLC  
ATC Outdoor DAS, LLC  
116 Huntington Avenue, 11th Floor  
Boston, MA 02116

\*Kentucky Hearing and Telephone Corpo d/b/a  
Kentucky Hearing and Telephone Corporation  
5070 Mark IV Parkway  
Fort Worth, TX 76106

\*Katherine Yunker  
McBrayer PLLC  
201 East Main Street  
Suite 900  
Lexington, KENTUCKY 40507

\*East Kentucky Network, LLC dba Appal  
East Kentucky Network, LLC dba Appalachian  
101 Technology Trail  
Ivel, KY 41642

\*American Broadband and Telecommunica  
American Broadband and Telecommunications  
1 Seagate, Suite 600  
Toledo, OH 43699

\*Alltel Corporation d/b/a Verizon Wir  
Alltel Corporation d/b/a Verizon Wireless  
2200 Cabot Drive, Suite 400  
Lisle, IL 60532

\*East Kentucky Network, LLC  
East Kentucky Network, LLC  
101 Technology Trail  
Ivel, KY 41642

\*American Broadband and Telecommunica  
American Broadband and Telecommunications  
1 Seagate, Suite 600  
Toledo, OH 43699

\*Selectel, Inc. d/b/a SelectTel Wirele  
SelectTel, Inc. d/b/a SelectTel Wireless  
1825 N Bell Street  
Fremont, NE 40504

\*ComTech 21, LLC  
ComTech 21, LLC  
One Barnes Park South  
Wallingford, CT 06492

\*Lycamobile USA, Inc.  
Lycamobile USA, Inc.  
24 Commerce Street, Suite 100  
Newark, NJ 07102

\*Windward Wireless LLC  
Windward Wireless LLC  
3245 Peachtree Pkwy, Suite D  
Suwanee, GA 30024

\*dishNet Wireline, LLC  
dishNet Wireline, LLC  
9601 S Meridian Blvd  
Englewood, CO 80155

\*Beaver Telecom, LLC  
Beaver Telecom, LLC  
1509 McDuffie Street  
Houston, TX 77019

\*Windward Wireless LLC  
Windward Wireless LLC  
3245 Peachtree Pkwy, Suite D  
Suwanee, GA 30024

\*Magna5 LLC  
Magna5 LLC  
3001 Dallas Pkwy, Suite 610  
Frisco, TX 75034

\*Vonage Business Networks, Inc.  
Vonage Business Networks, Inc.  
23 Main Street  
Holmdel, NJ 07733

\*Phone Club Corporation  
Phone Club Corporation  
4262 Old A1A  
Palm Coast, FL 32137

\*Boomerang Wireless, LLC  
Boomerang Wireless, LLC  
955 Kacena Road, Suite A  
Hiawatha, IA 52233

\*Foothills Rural Telephone Cooperativ  
Foothills Rural Telephone Cooperative  
1621 Kentucky Route 40 W  
P. O. Box 240  
Staffordsville, KY 41256

\*Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative  
Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative  
425 Main Street, Suite 1  
P. O. Box 399  
West Liberty, KY 41472

\*Total Call Mobile, Inc.  
Total Call Mobile, Inc.  
1411 W 190th Street, Suite 650  
Gardena, CA 90248

\*Cellular Services, LLC  
Cellular Services, LLC  
1621 KY Route 40W  
P. O. Box 240  
Staffordsville, KY 41256

\*Q Link Wireless, LLC  
Q Link Wireless, LLC  
499 East Sheridan Street, Suite 400  
Dania, FL 33004

\*Touchtone Communications, Inc.  
Touchtone Communications, Inc.  
3 Wing Drive, Suite 103  
Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927

\*TracFone Wireless, Inc.  
TracFone Wireless, Inc.  
9700 NW 112th Avenue  
Miami, FL 33178

\*BetterWorld Telecom, LLC  
BetterWorld Telecom, LLC  
11951 Freedom Drive, 13th Floor  
Reston, VA 20190

\*Touchtone Communications, Inc.  
Touchtone Communications, Inc.  
3 Wing Drive, Suite 103  
Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927

\*IM Telecom, LLC d/b/a Infiniti Mobil  
IM Telecom, LLC d/b/a Infiniti Mobile  
13601 Preston Road, Suite 816E  
Dallas, TX 75240

\*i-Wireless, LLC  
i-Wireless, LLC  
1 Levee Way, Suite 3104  
Newport, KY 41071

\*US LEC of Tennessee, LLC  
US LEC of Tennessee, LLC  
4001 N Rodney Parham Road  
Little Rock, AR 72212

\*Windstream Communications, LLC  
Windstream Communications, LLC  
4001 N Rodney Parham Road  
Little Rock, AR 72212

\*Crexendo Business Solutions, Inc.  
Crexendo Business Solutions, Inc.  
1615 S 52nd Street  
Tempe, AZ 85281

\*Windstream Kentucky West, LLC  
Windstream Kentucky West, LLC  
4001 N Rodney Parham Road  
Little Rock, AR 72212

\*Windstream KDL, LLC  
Windstream KDL, LLC  
4001 N Rodney Parham Road  
Little Rock, AR 72212

\*SI Wireless, LLC d/b/a MobileNation d/b/a Twigby  
SI Wireless, LLC d/b/a MobileNation d/b/a Twigby  
1275 North Reed Station Road  
Carbondale, IL 62902

\*Windstream NuVox, LLC  
Windstream NuVox, LLC  
4001 N Rodney Parham Road  
Little Rock, AR 72212

\*PAETEC Communications, LLC  
PAETEC Communications, LLC  
4001 N Rodney Parham Road  
Little Rock, AR 72212

\*Consumer Cellular, Incorporated  
Consumer Cellular, Incorporated  
12447 SW 69th Avenue  
Portland, OR 97223

\*Talk America, LLC  
Talk America, LLC  
4001 N Rodney Parham Road  
Little Rock, AR 72212

\*Windstream NTI, LLC  
Windstream NTI, LLC  
4001 N Rodney Parham Road  
Little Rock, AR 72212

\*OneTone Telecom, Inc.  
OneTone Telecom, Inc.  
100 Century Plaza  
Suite 9-1  
Seneca, SC 29672

\*Network Telephone, LLC  
Network Telephone, LLC  
4001 N Rodney Parham Road  
Little Rock, AR 72212

\*Windstream Kentucky East, LLC  
Windstream Kentucky East, LLC  
4001 N Rodney Parham Road  
Little Rock, AR 72212

\*NextGen Communications, Inc.  
NextGen Communications, Inc.  
2401 Elliott Avenue, Suite 200  
Seattle, WA 98121

\*McLeodUSA Telecommunications Service  
McLeodUSA Telecommunications Services, LLC  
4001 N Rodney Parham Road  
Little Rock, AR 72212

\*Cellco Partnership dba Verizon Wirel  
Cellco Partnership dba Verizon Wireless  
One Verizon Way, Mailcode VC53S309D  
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920

\*Windstream Norlight, LLC  
Windstream Norlight, LLC  
4001 Rodney Parham Road  
Little Rock, AR 72212

\*The Other Phone Company, LLC  
The Other Phone Company, LLC  
4001 N Rodney Parham Road  
Little Rock, AR 72212

\*Verizon Americas LLC dba Verizon Wir  
Verizon Americas LLC dba Verizon Wireless  
One Verizon Way, Mailcode VC53S309D  
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920

\*Kentucky RSA #1 Partnership  
Kentucky RSA #1 Partnership  
One Verizon Way, Mailcode VC53S309D  
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920

\*Ted Heckman  
Managing Director, Regulatory & Government  
Cincinnati Bell Telephone Company LLC  
221 E Fourth Street, Room 103-1080  
Cincinnati, OH 45201-2301

\*New Par dba Verizon Wireless  
New Par dba Verizon Wireless  
One Verizon Way, Mailcode VC53S309D  
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920

\*Wild Telecommunications, Inc.  
Wild Telecommunications, Inc.  
220 Greenbriar Road  
Lexington, KY 40503

\*Rural Cellular Corporation dba Verizon Wireless  
Rural Cellular Corporation dba Verizon Wireless  
One Verizon Way, Mailcode VC53S309D  
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920

\*MuniNet Fiber Agency  
MuniNet Fiber Agency  
1500 Broadway Street  
Paducah, KY 42001

\*Kynect Communications, LLC  
Kynect Communications, LLC  
14675 Dallas Parkway, Suite 150  
Dallas, TX 75254

\*The Electric Plant Board of the City d/b/a  
The Electric Plant Board of the City of Paducah,  
1500 Broadway Street  
Paducah, KY 42001

\*Win.Net Telecommunications, Inc.  
Win.Net Telecommunications, Inc.  
332 W Broadway, Suite 214  
Louisville, KY 40202

\*Edward T Depp  
Dinsmore & Shohl, LLP  
101 South Fifth Street  
Suite 2500  
Louisville, KENTUCKY 40202

\*Easy Telephone Service Company dba E  
Easy Telephone Service Company dba Easy  
4352 SE 95th Street  
Ocala, FL 34480

\*Duo County Telephone Cooperative Cor  
Duo County Telephone Cooperative Corporation,  
2150 N Main Street  
P. O. Box 80  
Jamestown, KY 42629

\*Solavei, LLC  
Solavei, LLC  
10500 NE 8th Street, Suite 1300  
Bellevue, WA 98004

\*Velocity Networks of Kentucky, Inc.  
Velocity Networks of Kentucky, Inc.  
5550 77 Center Drive, Suite 220  
Charlotte, NC 28217