

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Petition            ) Application No. C-2846  
from the residents of the                )  
Creston exchange, served by            )  
Qwest Corporation, requesting         ) GRANTED  
extended area service (EAS) to        )  
the Columbus exchange, served by     )  
Citizens Telecommunications            )  
Company of Nebraska.                    ) Entered: September 3, 2003

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N     A N D     F I N D I N G S

A petition was filed November 27, 2002, by the residents of the Creston exchange, served by Qwest Corporation (Qwest), requesting extended area service (EAS) to the Columbus exchange, served by Citizens Telecommunications Company of Nebraska (Citizens). On December 6, 2002, the Commission verified that the petitions contained the requisite number of signatures. Notice of this Petition was published in The Daily Record, Omaha, Nebraska on December 7, 2002.

As required by Rule 002.27C3 of the Commission Telecommunications Rules and Regulations, Title 291, Chapter 5, a point-to-point usage study was commenced to determine if a community of interest exists. On January 15, 2003, the Commission verified that the traffic study information filed in the above-captioned docket represented a sufficient interest from the customers to meet Commission rules and directed Qwest and Citizens to establish proposed rates to implement the EAS plan. Qwest and Citizens provided proposed rates for EAS between the Creston and Columbus exchanges by the deadline.

The proposed monthly rate additives were as follows:

Creston Customers

Columbus Customers

\$1.80 per line additive (Residential)	\$0.05 per line additive
\$2.00 per line additive (Business)	

On June 3, 2003, the Commission approved balloting for the affected customers in the Creston exchange pursuant to Rule 002.27C6. However, because of the minimal increase proposed for the Columbus customers, the Commission granted a waiver of the balloting requirement for the Columbus customers.

An informational meeting was held in Creston on May 21, 2003. After Commission approval of the ballots on June 3, 2003, the ballots were mailed with a return date of no later than August 21, 2003. Of the 171 ballots received, 122 ballots were in favor of the EAS proposal and 17 ballots indicated opposition to the plan. 32 ballots were incomplete or invalid. Thus, 71 percent of the Creston subscribers voted in favor of the plan, exceeding the 50 percent benchmark required by Commission Rule. The request to implement extended area service between the Creston exchange and the Columbus exchange should be granted, with the new service beginning on or before December 17, 2003.

O R D E R

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Nebraska Public Service Commission that Application No. C-2846 be, and it is hereby, granted and the EAS between the Creston exchange served by Qwest Corporation and the Columbus exchange, served by Citizens Telecommunications Company of Nebraska, is approved.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that such rates are to be implemented on or before December 17, 2003, concurrent with the availability of the new EAS.

IT IS FINNALLY ORDERED that if the December 17, 2003, implementation date cannot be met; the parties shall advise the Commission on its progress.

MADE AND ENTERED at Lincoln, Nebraska, this 3rd day of September, 2003.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:

Chair

ATTEST:

Executive Director