



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

Daniel R. Ebert, Chairperson
Mark Meyer, Commissioner
Lauren Azar, Commissioner

610 North Whitney Way
P.O. Box 7854
Madison, WI 53707-7854

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Contact: Timothy Le Monds or Amanda Wollin, (608) 266-9600

PSC Requires Telecommunications Providers in 715 and 920 Area Codes to Further Conserve Phone Numbers

Number Pooling to Extend Life of Area Codes

MADISON – The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) today established mandatory number pooling in the 715 and 920 area codes to further conserve phone numbers and delay area code exhaustion in these areas.

“The Commission is taking this step as another conservation effort to postpone the eventual need for new area codes in the 715 and 920 areas,” said Chairperson Dan Ebert. “Nobody likes seeing area code changes, but the reality is that it cannot be avoided. Number pooling has worked in other areas to better use existing numbering resources and we now want to leverage benefits of pooling in these two parts of Wisconsin.”

In recent years, the prevalence of technology in everyday life has increased tremendously, causing an elevated demand for telecommunications services. This rapid growth has resulted in nearly all telephone number prefixes in the 715 and 920 area codes to be assigned, leading toward area code exhaustion. This exhaustion means new area codes will have to be introduced in the 715 and 920 areas.

Typically, telecommunications providers are assigned phone numbers in blocks of 10,000 and many of these numbers go unused. To help extend the life of the 715 and 920 area codes, allowing more time for the PSC, providers and customers to prepare for implementation of new area codes, the Commission is requiring telecommunications providers to pool their unused numbers. These unused numbers will then be reassigned as needed in blocks of 1,000.

For the past year, the PSC has been addressing area code exhaustion in the 715 and 920 area codes. In recent months, the PSC held public hearings throughout the state on relief plans. Although the Commission is now requiring providers to pool their unused numbers, the Commission is still moving forward to address relief efforts. A decision on relief efforts is expected in 2008. For more information about these plans, please visit the PSC’s website at <http://psc.wi.gov/utilityinfo/tele/areaCodes/home-AreaCodeRelief.htm>.

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