

Service Date: September 18, 1986

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE REGULATION
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

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IN THE MATTER Of the Investigation)
Into the Quality of Service to) UTILITY DIVISION
NORTHWESTERN TELEPHONE SYSTEMS') DOCKET NO. 86.9.44
Montana Customers.) ORDER NO. 5220

BACKGROUND

Northwestern Telephone Systems, Inc. (NWTS) is a public utility within the State of Montana. Section 69-3-201, MCA states that every public utility is required to furnish reasonable adequate service and facilities. The Montana Public Service Commission has the legal duty to supervise the service of public utilities (Sec. 69-3-102).

DISCUSSION

The Commission has received numerous complaints from customers in the NWTS area. Given the relative size of NWTS' serving area, there seems to be more complaints from customers in this area than for any other telephone company in the state. NWTS has seemed unwilling to work with the Commission staff informally to resolve some of the complaints that have surfaced. Therefore, in view of what appears to be a service oriented problem in the NWTS area, the

Commission is initiating this investigation to determine if NWTS is providing reasonably adequate service and facilities as required by Montana law. All areas of service such as adequacy of facilities and billing and collection policies may be addressed during this investigation. The Commission wishes to specifically address the following areas:

1. Why NWTS should not immediately implement a third party notification system for terminations in cases where it is requested?

2. Why NWTS should not be required to refund the charges for ringer requirement changes where the need for the change arose out of NWTS's conversion of a central office?

3. Why NWTS should not implement a policy to provide free directories to hotels and motels and in other cases where the customer can demonstrate a reasonable need for more than one directory per line?

4. Why NWTS construction charge policies should not be changed to allow construction to a location without an immediate service order?

5. Why NWTS should not be required to fund construction at a level such that all persons requesting regrades or service can be

provided with the requested grade of service within a reasonable timeframe?

6. Why NWTS should not be required to implement tariffs setting forth reasonable timeframes to complete repair calls?

ORDER

1. The Commission staff and any intervenors in this Docket may inquire into Northwestern Telephone Systems' service using reasonable discovery procedures.

2. The Commission staff shall hold a prehearing conference to review with interested persons the issues set out in this order and interested parties may propose additional issues, as well as suggest procedures to be followed in this Docket. Interested parties may also propose resolution of any of the issues set forth in this Order.

3. The Commission shall issue a Procedural Order setting forth the procedures to be followed and any issues not resolved that remain to be considered in this Docket.

DONE IN OPEN SESSION at Helena, Montana this 15th day of September, 1986 by a 5 - 0 vote.

BY ORDER OF THE MONTANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

HOWARD L. ELLIS, Commissioner

DANNY OBERG, Commissioner

JOHN B. DRISCOLL, Commissioner

ATTEST:

Ann Purcell
Commission Secretary

(SEAL)

NOTE: Any interested party may request that the Commission to reconsider this decision. A motion to reconsider must be filed within ten (10) days. See 38.2.4806, ARM.