

Montana Public Service Commission
1701 Prospect Avenue
PO Box 202601
Helena MT 59620-2601

For more information, contact:
Martin Jacobson - 406-444-6178

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PSC INVITES PUBLIC COMMENT ON PROPOSED EXTENDED AREA PHONE SERVICE

Public Service Commissioner Dave Fisher will conduct public hearings in Bozeman and Livingston on December 10 to hear comments on US West Communications' proposals for telephone extended area service between the existing Bozeman calling area, Livingston, Clyde Park and Wilsall. Extended area service expands local calling areas so that customers' phone calls within an EAS region will be local, not long-distance. However, local phone rates in an EAS region must increase to recover EAS costs. US West has proposed three rate alternatives under which EAS, if approved by the PSC, could be provided to include Bozeman, Livingston, Clyde Park and Wilsall in one local calling area.

The hearings will be held at the following times and locations:
Livingston - Tuesday, December 10, at 2 p.m., city hall community room, 414 E. Callender.

Bozeman - Tuesday, December 10, at 7 p.m., public library, 220 E. Lamme.

US West has proposed three rate options for EAS in the Bozeman region. If the PSC approves EAS, it must choose one of the options, or develop an alternative.
Option 1 - Increase local phone rates by \$2.62 per month in all exchanges in the state where EAS is implemented.

Option 2 - Increase local rates based on the total number of lines in the EAS region. Generally, the more lines in a region, the greater the rate increase. Under this option, Bozeman, Livingston, Clyde Park and Wilsall customers' local phone bills would increase by \$2.10 per month.

Option 3 - Increase local rates in individual exchanges based on the number of additional lines EAS makes available for local calling from those exchanges. Under the four alternatives of this option, the rate increase for Bozeman customers would be smaller than the rate increases for the outlying exchange customers. The four alternatives are:

- a) a monthly increase of \$2.36 for Bozeman customers and \$4 for Livingston, Clyde Park and Wilsall;
- b) a monthly increase of \$2 for Bozeman customers and \$5.65 for Livingston, Clyde Park and Wilsall;
- c) a monthly increase of \$1.50 for Bozeman customers and \$7.93 for Livingston, Clyde Park and Wilsall;
- d) a monthly increase of \$1 for Bozeman customers and \$10.19 for Livingston, Clyde Park and Wilsall.

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