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**PSC URGES CUSTOMERS OF DEFUNCT MONTANA TEL-NET
TO SWITCH PHONE COMPANIES WITHOUT DELAY**

Customers of Montana Tel-Net, a local telephone company serving about 150 customers in Montana, should choose a new local carrier as soon as possible because Tel-Net is no longer providing customer service and appears to be out of business, according to the state Public Service Commission.

PSC chairman Dave Fisher said it appears from all indications that the Missoula-based Montana Tel-Net is no longer in business. At least some, if not all, Tel-Net customers were sent a letter by Tel-Net dated July 31 that informed them the company was no longer doing business as of August 1. In addition, the PSC has received several complaints in the past week from Tel-Net customers who reported they are unable to contact Tel-Net by phone because the company's customer service number has been disconnected, or in person because the company's Missoula office has apparently been vacated.

The PSC has confirmed that Tel-Net has disconnected its customer service telephone lines, making it impossible for customers to contact the company to inquire about their phone service or to report problems. Failure to provide customer service during regular business hours is a violation of PSC rules. Fisher said the PSC continues to investigate the situation and will ensure Tel-Net customers' phone service is not disrupted.

Tel-Net is a reseller of US West Communications' local phone service. US West has informed the PSC that it has not yet decided what action to take in this situation but, for the time being at least, it has no plans to disconnect the phone service of Tel-Net customers.

The PSC advises existing Tel-Net customers to switch to a new carrier without delay. There are several companies offering local phone service in Montana from which to choose. Customers with questions or concerns can call the PSC at 1-800-646-6150.

Tel-Net has customers in Missoula, Lolo, Milltown, Hamilton, Victor, Stevensville, Corvallis, Darby, Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Gardiner, Great Falls and Livingston.

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