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PSC NOTIFIES LOCAL PHONE COMPANIES OF  
US WEST LINE SHARING AGREEMENT

The state Public Service Commission notified Montana telephone companies last week that US West Communications and a group of local phone companies that compete with US West in 13 states of the company's 14-state territory have negotiated an interim line sharing agreement.

Line sharing occurs when an incumbent local phone company like US West provides a competitor with access to the high frequency portion of the phone line. Line sharing allows the competitor to offer its customer advanced digital services such as high-speed Internet access on the high-frequency portion of the copper loop serving the customer at the same time and on the same loop that US West uses to provides traditional analog voice service to its customer.

To take advantage of line sharing, a competitive local carrier must have an appropriate splitter installed in US West's central office that serves the end user of the loop. In addition, the carrier must provide the end user with, and is responsible for the installation of, a splitter, filter and any other equipment necessary for the end user to receive separate voice and data services across the loop.

The provisions of the interim line sharing agreement will allow competitive local carriers to obtain line sharing from US West until each carrier and US West have amended their individual interconnection agreements to allow for line sharing. Any carrier that was not a party to the interim line sharing agreement may opt into the agreement.

Details on pricing, deployment and conditions are contained in the interim agreement, which is available on the PSC's Internet website at [www.psc.state.mt.us/press.htm](http://www.psc.state.mt.us/press.htm).

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