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PSC SCHEDULES 3 PUBLIC MEETINGS ON SALE OF
QWEST TELEPHONE EXCHANGES TO CITIZENS TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Public Service Commission will hold public meetings in East Glacier and Shelby on April 27 and in Forsyth on May 2 concerning the proposed sale by Qwest of ten of its Montana exchanges to Citizens Telecommunications Company.

The meetings are scheduled as follows:

East Glacier - Friday, April 27, 9 a.m., East Glacier Community Hall, 420 Highway 2 at Glacier Avenue.

Shelby - Friday, April 27, 2 p.m., Marias River Electric Cooperative, 910 Roosevelt Highway

Forsyth - Wednesday, May 2, 10 a.m., County Library, 201 N. 9th Ave.

Exchanges included in the proposed sale are Colstrip, Conrad, Cooke City, Cut Bank, East Glacier, Fairview, Forsyth, Shelby, St. Mary and West Glacier. There are a total of 12,000 Montana access lines involved in the sale.

Citizens is a subsidiary of the Delaware-based Citizens Utilities Co., and currently provides local phone service in Libby, Troy and Eureka.

If the sale is approved, Citizens will retain Qwest's existing rates for customers in the sold exchanges for at least six months after the sale.

Qwest, Citizens and the Montana Consumer Counsel, which represents the interests of residential and small business consumers in proceedings before the PSC, have asked the PSC to approve a stipulation they negotiated as a means to settle the issues in the sale proceeding. The stipulation calls for the PSC to declare the sale to be in the public interest and to refrain from allocating any portion of Qwest's profit on the sale to ratepayers. Also under the terms of the stipulation, Qwest would increase its accumulated depreciation reserve for its Montana operations by \$3 million, an amount that would not be reflected in Qwest customers' rates until the company files a general rate case in Montana.

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