



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

August 23, 2004

For more information, contact:
Tom Schneider – 406-444-6169
Gary Duncan – 406-444-6189

**PSC TO HOLD SECOND HEARING SEPT. 1
ON LINCOLN TELEPHONE COMPANY'S
EXPANDED LOCAL CALLING PROPOSAL**

The state Public Service Commission will hold a second public hearing in Lincoln on Wednesday, September 1, to obtain comments on the proposal of Lincoln Telephone Company for extended area telephone service between Lincoln Telephone's Lincoln and Canyon Creek exchanges and Qwest's Helena local calling region, which includes Helena, East Helena, Helena Valley, Clancy, Canyon Ferry, Townsend, Wolf Creek, and Boulder. Extended area service expands local calling areas so that customers' phone calls within an EAS area are local, not long-distance. However, local phone rates in an EAS area must increase to recover EAS costs.

The hearing will be held at 7 p.m. at the Lincoln School gymnasium.

The PSC held a hearing on this matter August 19 in Lincoln, but a number of Lincoln residents have since complained to the PSC about lack of sufficient notice of the original hearing. The September 1 hearing is being scheduled in order to ensure affected customers of Lincoln Telephone have adequate opportunity to comment on the EAS proposal.

If the EAS proposal is approved by the PSC, Lincoln Telephone will increase its monthly residential rates from \$11.90 to \$18.45, a difference of \$6.55. The business rates will increase from \$16.20 to \$22.75, a difference of \$6.55. A lower-cost measured service option will also be available. The proposed measured service option for residential service is \$15.95 plus 5 cents per minute for outgoing calls to the Helena area and Canyon Creek exchanges. The proposed measured service option for business service is \$20.25 plus 5 cents per minute for outgoing calls to the Helena area and Canyon Creek exchanges.

###