

News Release
Montana Public Service Commission

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 16, 2014

PSC Implements Public Disclosure Guidelines for Rural Telecom Compensation

HELENA – On June 10th, the Montana Public Service Commission unanimously approved public disclosure guidelines relating to the compensation of rural telephone company executives and management. Balancing the public’s right to know with an individual’s right to privacy, Commissioners implemented a multi-part test to determine if disclosure is warranted. This test is not a one size fits all rule, but rather an analysis that will be done on a case by case basis.

For the Commissioners, the percentage of federal funding and grants received by the telephone companies was a key factor in determining whether disclosure was necessary. The PSC concluded that federal funding at 20% or more of gross revenue constituted a threshold level, since taxpayers foot the bill for a substantial percentage of the telephone company’s budget.

If a rural telecom company meets that threshold level and it has executives or management members making \$100,000 or more in total yearly compensation, those salaries will be publicly disclosed.

The PSC determined that reporting the company’s specific number of employees was not necessarily relevant in such a scenario. However, the public has a right to know how taxpayer funds are being used, which outweighs concerns over compensation confidentiality.

As Commissioner Travis Kavulla noted, “Sunshine is often the best disinfectant and I believe these disclosure rules provide that.”

###

For more information, visit psc.mt.gov or contact PSC Communications Director Chris Shipp at (406) 444-6171. Follow the PSC at [Twitter.com/MT_PSC](https://twitter.com/MT_PSC) or visit [Facebook.com/MontanaPSC](https://facebook.com/MontanaPSC).