

News from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Patrick K. Petree Reference: PUD62797-55

Corporation Commission Approves Structure for New Area Code

OKLAHOMA CITY -- The Oklahoma Corporation Commission Thursday (June 26) approved a telephone industry plan for adding a third area code for Oklahoma telephone customers.

The Oklahoma City metropolitan area, comprising the Oklahoma City local calling zone and several exchanges beyond the local calling zone boundaries, will retain the 405 area code. The commissioners added the Stillwater and Perkins exchanges to the metropolitan area proposed by the telephone industry.

The new area code will be assigned to customers outside the Oklahoma City metropolitan area who are now served by the 405 area code. That territory includes north, west, south and extreme southeastern Oklahoma.

The change in area codes will not affect existing local or long-distance calling zones because both the revised 405 area code and the new area code will be in the same LATA (Local Access and Transport Area), a telephone industry service territory.

The new area code number is expected to be assigned by the North American Code Administrator by mid or late July.

The telephone industry and the commission staff recommended keeping the 405 area code for the Oklahoma City metropolitan area due to the area's higher customer density and the correspondingly higher cost of making changes to accommodate a new area code, John Gray, a commission telephone attorney, said.

The transition to use of the new area code will be phased in over an 11-month period, and the telephone industry will be required to provide a customer education program throughout the transition period.

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Area Code-2

According to the timetable approved by the Corporation Commission, preparations will begin July 1, and use of the new area code will begin on Nov.1. From November until April 1, 1998, callers can reach destinations in the new area code territory by using either the 405 or the new area code number.

From April 1 until June 1, 1998, incorrectly placed calls will be intercepted and a recorded message will advise callers of the proper area code for reaching desired numbers.

The caller assistance program will end on June 1, 1998.

Southwestern Bell, acting as the Oklahoma Central Office Code Administrator, petitioned for the new area code due to a growing shortage of numbers in the 405 area code, caused mainly by a demand for new numbers for cellular telephones, pagers, fax machines, computers and other modern communications equipment.

The commission staff estimates that adding the new area code will ensure an adequate supply of telephone numbers for six years for the Oklahoma City metropolitan area and eight years for the non-metropolitan area.

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