

News from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission

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OCC Orders Dialing Parity for IntraLATA Long-Distance Calling

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Corporation Commission Monday (Feb. 8) ordered Southwestern Bell Telephone to make "1-plus" dialing available to all companies that want to provide long-distance service in Oklahoma's two Local Access and Transport Area (LATA) zones, one covering the 918 area code and the other covering the 405 and 580 area codes.

Presently, when a Southwestern Bell customer dials "1" before placing an intraLATA call, the call is handled by Southwestern Bell. Long-distance companies have offered intraLATA service in Oklahoma since April 1994, but their customers have been required to dial "10" and the carrier's three-digit identification code.

The new rule will allow customers to choose a primary carrier for 1-plus dialing for intraLATA calls, just as they now select a long-distance carrier for 1-plus dialing of interstate and interLATA calls.

Southwestern Bell will start processing requests for intraLATA carrier changes on March 25. Southwestern Bell will begin immediately to notify customers, interexchange carriers and competitive local exchange carriers of the new dialing parity rule.

The commission order reflects an agreement on 1-plus dialing parity reached by Southwestern Bell, MCI Telecommunications, Sprint Communications, WorldCom Inc., the Oklahoma Attorney General and the Corporation Commission's public utility staff.

Commission Chairman Ed Apple praised the negotiated agreement. "It is a tribute to the telecommunications companies that they placed customer interests above corporate interests in opening another element of telephone service to competition," Apple said.

"This order finally allows Oklahoma to join 21 other states that have offered this simplified

competitive option for over three years," Commissioner Bob Anthony said.

Commissioner Denise Bode described the rule change as "an important step toward providing meaningful competition in Oklahoma."

"Thank goodness, Oklahomans won't have to dial 20 numbers anymore just to get a competitive rate. I know this will make a lot of people's lives easier," she said.

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