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Lawrence M. Shaw  
PresidentSTATE OF WASH.  
UTIL. AND TRANSP.  
COMMISSION

September 20, 2001

Washington UTC  
Post Office Box 47250  
Olympia, Washington 98504-7250

Re: Docket #UT990146

Dear People:

The week before last we lost our local phone line service; all six lines!

For a company that literally does all our business on the phones this was a catastrophe. As a kind of post mortem, I'd like to take a moment to explore the events that occurred and ask for your help.

NorMed is an 8 million dollar sales company with nearly 50 employees. Approximately 2 years ago we decided to try a proposal from McLeodUSA to use them as our local phone line provider. Essentially we have had no phone line quality issues with this relationship until Tuesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2002 when we arrived to find we had no local service. For 4 days we were unable to receive any faxes or local orders or to place any 800# outbound calls. Based on sales the previous week we estimate that we lost between \$15,000 and \$20,000. This occurred even as we did everything possible to get our service restored including an immediate complaint filed with your staff and phone calls literally every 30 to 45 minutes to McLeodUSA and Qwest.

The key points we'd like you to consider are:

- 1) The loss of service was totally a result of an error on McLeod's part. They have agreed and are apologetic. At no time did we have any indication this would occur. There was no "cut off" warning. In fact, McLeod had no intention of terminating our service. We simply got on a wrong list of customers who had previously left McLeod. They were supposedly "simply" releasing old numbers.
- 2) Once our account had been terminated there was no mechanism to reestablish service without going through a lengthy (we were originally quoted 18 days) new service activation process. Even when I was ready to pay nearly any amount, there was no way (according to Qwest) for us to expedite "reinstallation".

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- 3) And probably the most frustrating part is that it is simply impossible to reach people at either of these companies who have the knowledge or authority to deal with problems. Only when I was able to find a knowledgeable third party through my personal business contacts were we able to get phone numbers for people who could help us.

I understand Qwest wants to be in the long distance business but not lose local service customers. I also understand McLeod is in bankruptcy and has huge operational problems. But this cannot result in such an adversarial relationship that there is no mechanism for dealing with errors in a very prompt 2 - 4 hour time frame. Definitely McLeod should have to pay Qwest for their mistake but we cannot allow this to result in huge losses to businesses in Washington State.

Thank you for your consideration. Hopefully our misfortune will lead to changes that will prevent others from similar nightmares.

Sincerely,



Lawrence M. Shaw  
President

LMS/tlb

via certified