

Agenda Date: April 28, 2016
Item Number: D1

Docket: UT-132234
Company: CenturyTel of Inter Island, Inc. d/b/a CenturyLink

Staff: John Cupp, Regulatory Analyst
Amanda Maxwell, Communications Director

Recommendation

Approve the San Juan County and statewide communications plans filed January 20, 2016.

Discussion

In November 2013, CenturyLink's San Juan County customers lost voice and data service for 10 days due to a severed underwater cable. Commission staff subsequently initiated an investigation into the outage. On November 5, 2014, staff filed a complaint against CenturyLink, alleging violations and recommending penalties. On June 26, 2015, the company, staff, and the Public Counsel unit of the Attorney General's Office filed a settlement agreement to resolve the complaint. The parties agreed to the development of a San Juan County Emergency Communications Plan and a Washington State Emergency Communications Plan.

Commission Order 03, accepted and adopted the settlement agreement with conditions. The order requires CenturyLink to file both plans within three months of the order's October 20, 2015 effective date. The order also requires the Washington Military Department to be included in all meetings and discussions regarding the communications plans.

On December 9, 2015, commission staff facilitated a meeting in Friday Harbor for the purpose of drafting the San Juan County Emergency Communications Plan. In attendance were representatives from commission staff, CenturyLink, Washington Military Department, San Juan County Emergency Management, San Juan County E911, and Public Counsel.

On December 15, 2015, at commission headquarters, CenturyLink, Washington Military Department, Public Counsel and staff met to draft the Washington State Emergency Communications Plan.

CenturyLink and the parties agreed that the goal for each plan was to ensure the company makes timely and accurate information about a major outage of telephone service available to the commission, customers, emergency management, and media. Each plan lists strategies and tactics the company will take in the event of an outage to inform identified target audiences.

On January 20, CenturyLink filed the San Juan and statewide outage communications plans for the commission's review.

Order 03 says the commission will approve or reject the plans at an open meeting.

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Conclusion

Staff believes CenturyLink has met the conditions of Order 03, and recommends the commission approve the San Juan County Outage Communications Plan and a Washington State Outage Communications Plan.