

Agenda Date: July 9, 2003
Item Number: A4

Docket: UT-030898
Company Name: Advanced Telcom Group, Inc.

Staff: Dave Dittmore, Telecommunications Engineer
Glenn Blackmon, Ass't Director – Telecommunications
Rebecca Beaton, Telecommunications Analyst
Bob Williamson, Telecommunications Engineer

Recommendation:

Issue an order, waiving requirements for granting a block of 1,000 numbers, requested under Docket UT-030898.

Discussion:

Numbering Plan Area (NPA) 360 has been under pressure from a reduced number of Prefixes available, since it was placed in jeopardy in 1999. Commission staff (Staff) has investigated several means of extending the exhaust of this area code, such as Rate Center Consolidation and Number Pooling, which have allowed the exhaust date to be extended several times, and now is estimated to be third quarter of 2005. Prefix usage has significantly slowed since Wireless Carriers have been forced to utilize Thousands Block Number Pooling in November 2002. Staff expects the forecasted exhaust date to be extended further in the near future, and the Jeopardy Plan cancelled. The forecasted exhaust of the other area codes in western Washington has also been extended to: (206 – first quarter 2016, 253 – third quarter 2014, 425 – third quarter 2014).

In its monitoring of usage of prefixes in NPA 360, Staff has discovered that many prefixes have very low utilization – stranded prefixes. Because prefixes are tied to the Rate Center, number pooling and rate center consolidation by themselves cannot solve our prefix shortage. As of the end of 2002, there were approximately 2,700,000 numbers assigned and 3,500,000 spare, so obviously there is no shortage of numbers – the structure of how they are assigned limits their usage. Thus the problem is recovering whole prefixes for reassignment. Local Exchange carriers locating a new switch in Washington to serve the 360 NPA will need to be granted a Local Routing Number (LRN), that effectively restricts another prefix to a particular Rate Center.

As of December 2002, there were 84 prefixes with 50 or less numbers in use, 113 with less than 100 numbers in use (of 10,000). Staff recommends granting a block of 1,000 numbers to the code holders of these blocks (in Rate Centers in Number Pooling areas, where sufficient blocks are in the pool inventory), so that all future assignments would be made in the block. Thus there would be no increase in assignments in the existing prefixes. Over time, the assigned numbers

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could decrease due to churn (the moving of customer away from the area or to different providers).

One possibility for future extension would be forcing customers to change numbers, to allow prefix returns. By stopping assignments in these stranded prefixes, the impact of such a plan is minimized. Staff does not imply that this course of action is necessary or desirable; simply that it is a possibility in the future.

The first company to cooperate in this trial is Advanced Telecom Group, Inc. (ATG). This company has four prefixes in the Whatcom County rate center. These prefixes were obtained in separate rate centers before eleven rate centers were consolidated into one. All four prefixes have low levels of utilization. ATG has agreed to cooperate in this trial, as has the Pooling Administrator (Neustar). Since ATG does not meet the requirements for granting additional numbering requirements, the Commission would need to grant a waiver for a block of 1,000 numbers to be given to ATG.

Conclusion:

Issue an order, waiving requirements for granting a block of 1,000 numbers, requested under Docket UT-030898.