



Commission adopts proposal to disburse Qwest funds for suicide prevention hotline, E-911 dispatch training

Case No. GNR-T-16-04, Order No. 33532

Contact: Gene Fadness (208) 334-0339, 890-2712

BOISE (June 13, 2016) – The Idaho Public Utilities Commission adopted a proposal of commission staff to disburse about \$90,000 remaining in a commission-maintained Qwest Corporation compliance account to Idaho’s Suicide Prevention Hotline and to Idaho’s Police Officer Standards and Training Academy (POST).

Qwest, the predecessor company to what is now CenturyLink, paid into the fund when it failed to meet performance standards designed to ensure that other telecommunications providers were allowed access to Qwest facilities to provide competitive telecommunications services. Payments to the fund were discontinued in 2010.

Commission staff proposed that \$44,900 be allocated to the Idaho Department of Health & Welfare’s Suicide Prevention Action Network and \$44,910 be allocated toward training and certification of E-911 emergency dispatchers at POST.

The commission adopted staff’s recommendations, stating that the proposed uses of the remaining funds were in the public interest.

Suicide is the second-leading cause of death for Idahoans ages 15-34. Idaho’s overall suicide rate is 52 percent higher than the national average and double the national average for youths ages 10-19. To address this priority at-risk age group, the Suicide Prevention Hotline is launching “Texts for Life,” to reach people more comfortable texting or using an on-line chat service. While the new service will be open to all ages, the focus is on support for youths and others who favor these technologies, including veterans. The new money will improve the hotline’s capacity to handle several thousand text messages as well as chats and calls from those in crisis.

The allocation to POST will pay for about four years (at about \$10,000 a year) to fully develop the certification program required for emergency dispatchers at “911” centers while other funding solutions are identified.

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