

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Regulated Telecommunication Companies

Company	Location
Albion Telephone Company	Albion
Cambridge Telephone Company	Cambridge
CenturyLink*	Boise
CenturyTel of Idaho, Inc.*	Salt Lake City, UT
CenturyTel of the Gem State, Inc.	Salt Lake City, UT
Ziplay Fiber of Idaho, LLC*	Beaverton, OR
Columbine Telephone Company, Inc. dba Silver Star Communications	Freedom, WY
Direct Communications Rockland, Inc.	Rockland
Fremont Telcom Co.	Missoula, MT
Ziplay Fiber Northwest, LLC*	Beaverton, OR
Inland Telephone Company	Roslyn, WA
Midvale Telephone Company	Midvale
Oregon-Idaho Utilities	Nampa
Pine Telephone System, Inc.	Halfway, OR
Potlach Telephone Company*	Kendrick
Rural Telephone Company	Glenns Ferry
* These companies are no longer rate regulated; however, they are still regulated for customer service.	

Telecommunications Press Releases from the Commission for the Fiscal Year 2024

AT&T

Commission issues decision on application from telecommunications companies regarding certificate of public convenience and necessity that reflects name change, merger

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has issued a decision regarding an application from AT&T Corp. and AT&T Enterprises, Inc. that asked for a certificate of public convenience and necessity for a newly named company that would continue to offer local telecommunication exchange services in Idaho.

Utilities in Idaho are required to apply to the commission for the certificates when they intend to make changes to business operations.

After an internal restructuring, AT&T Enterprises, Inc. will undergo a name change to AT&T Enterprises, LLC. The companies asked that Enterprises, LLC.'s name be reflected on the proposed certificate of public convenience and necessity, which would cover the same service territory as that on a certificate of public convenience and necessity previously granted to AT&T Corp.

The two companies also asked that should the public utilities commission decide otherwise, AT&T Enterprises, Inc. be granted a new certificate with conditional approval of an amendment to the certificate for a name change to AT&T Enterprises, LLC. after adequate documentation regarding the name change is given to the commission.

The internal restructuring involves AT&T Corp. merging with AT&T Enterprises, Inc. in early May, after which AT&T Corp. would cease to exist. In addition, AT&T Enterprises, Inc. would change its name to AT&T Enterprises, LLC.

The companies said customer rates and service would not change after the restructuring.

The commission decided to grant a new certificate to AT&T Enterprises, Inc. because at the time of the application AT&T Enterprises, LLC. does not legally exist. In its decision issued May 1, the commission said if the companies want to change the name on the new certificate to AT&T Enterprises, LLC., the companies are required to submit a filing to the commission requesting the change within 60 days of May 1. The commission said the filing would be required to include documents related to the new company's certificate of authority to do business in Idaho as a foreign corporation and any other relevant documentation from the Idaho Secretary of State that would

certify the new company's authorization to conduct business in Idaho.

The commission also required AT&T Enterprises, Inc. to provide information regarding the number of basic local exchange customers it has and the services being offered, among other items, as part of the approval of its certificate.

Additional information is available at puc.idaho.gov/case/Details/7275.

ATC Communications

Commission approves telecommunication company's application regarding broadband equipment

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has approved an application from ATC Communications that asked the commission to confirm that equipment it installed in 2023 is qualified broadband equipment under Idaho code.

In its application, ATC said its net investment in qualifying broadband equipment in 2023 was \$3,064,718.54. ATC also said 99 percent of its Idaho subscribers have access to the broadband network. ATC indicated its transmission rates from 25 megabits per second to 1 gigabit per second meet the required rates of 200,000 bits per second to a subscriber and 125,000 bits per second from a subscriber.

Idaho code allows a taxpayer to receive an income tax credit for having installed the equipment during a calendar year. Before the taxpayer is eligible for the tax credit, the taxpayer is required to apply to the commission for an order confirming the installed equipment is qualified broadband equipment as defined in Idaho code. The code defines qualified broadband equipment as capable of transmitting signals at a rate of at least 200,000 bits per second to a subscriber and at least 125,000 bits per second from a subscriber and is primarily used to provide services in Idaho to public subscribers.

Commission staff reviewed ATC's application and determined the equipment is qualified broadband equipment eligible for the tax credit. ATC's application and the commission's order approving it are forwarded to the Idaho State Tax Commission.

The company is based in Albion, Idaho, and offers residential and business services in Idaho and Utah. Additional information is available at puc.idaho.gov/case/Details/7251.

CenturyLink

Commission denies telecom company's application seeking approval to have equipment designated as qualified broadband equipment

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has denied an application from CenturyLink requesting that equipment it installed in 2022 be designated as qualified broadband equipment.

Idaho code allows a taxpayer to receive an income tax credit for having installed qualified broadband equipment during a calendar year. Before the taxpayer is eligible for the credit, the taxpayer is required to apply to the commission for an order confirming the equipment is qualified broadband equipment as defined in Idaho statute. The statute defines the equipment as being capable of transmitting signals at a rate of at least 200,000 bits per second to a subscriber and at least 125,000 bits per second from a subscriber.

In its application to the commission, CenturyLink said its net investment in qualifying broadband equipment in 2022 was \$23,348,473. It indicated its lowest transmission rates were 500,000 bits per second and 250,000 bits per second for downloads and uploads, respectively.

The commission denied CenturyLink's application after reviewing it and determining it did not properly describe the broadband equipment in question. The company also did not respond to audit requests from commission staff for information on the equipment that would have included the brand, model number and manufacturer.

Additional information is available at puc.idaho.gov/case/Details/7232.

Centurytel of the Gem State, Gold Star Communications, LLC

Commission approves application seeking commercial mobile radio services agreement between telecom companies

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has approved an application that will allow CenturyTel of the Gem State and Gold Star Communications, LLC to enter into a commercial mobile radio services agreement.

The agreement establishes the terms, conditions, and pricing pertaining to the interconnection of the networks of the signees. It creates a two-way traffic so that customers of each signee can place and receive calls that originate from or terminate to a commercial mobile radio carrier which originate on one part of the network and terminate on the other network.

The Federal Telecommunications Act allows incumbent local exchange carriers to voluntarily negotiate with a requesting telecommunications carrier for interconnection, services or network support. The act requires that interconnection agreements, including any amendments to them, must be submitted to the commission for approval. The commission's review is limited, and it may reject an agreement adopted by the parties only if it finds that the agreement discriminates against a telecommunications carrier that is not a party to the agreement or the implementation of the agreement is not consistent with the public interest, convenience and necessity.

In approving the agreement, the commission found those were not issues.

Additional information is available at:

puc.idaho.gov/case/Details/7327.

CTC Telecom, Inc.

Commission approves amended certificate that reflects telecom utility changes

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has approved an application from a telecom utility that reflects the sale of equipment and changes to the services it offers customers.

CTC Telecom, Inc. applied to the commission to amend its Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to relinquish its right to provide voice and broadband services via fiber in Ada County. CTC Telecom told the commission it sold telecommunications equipment and facilities that were used to provide those services in Ada County. Millennium Networks, LLC bought the equipment and facilities, and is now the service provider.

CTC Telecom said it will continue to provide fixed wireless services in Ada County under the name “Wildness Wireless” and does not seek removal of the right to provide that service. The commission approved the utility’s application to amend its Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity.

Additional information is available at: puc.idaho.gov/case/Details/7057.

Direct Communications Rockland, Inc.

Commission approves telecommunications company’s application asking that equipment be recognized as broadband equipment

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has approved an application from Direct Communications Rockland, Inc. that designates equipment it installed in 2023 is qualified broadband equipment.

Idaho code allows a taxpayer to receive an income tax credit for having installed qualified broadband equipment during a calendar year. Before the taxpayer is eligible for the tax credit, it must apply to the Idaho Public Utilities Commission for an order confirming the equipment is qualified broadband equipment as defined in the statute.

The statute states that the equipment is capable of transmitting signals at a rate of at least 200,000 bits per second to a subscriber and at least 125,000 bits per second from a subscriber, and is primarily used to provide services in Idaho to public subscribers. In the case of a telecommunications carrier, qualifying equipment shall be necessary to the provision of broadband service and shall also be an integral part of a broadband network.

Additional information is available at: puc.idaho.gov/case/Details/7317.

Fatbeam, LLC

Commission approves application giving telecom company income tax credit

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has approved an application allowing Fatbeam, LLC to receive

an income tax credit for qualified broadband equipment.

Fatbeam said broadband services it offers to its customers are associated with fiber optic wide area network and wireless services, and that the company operates a 100 gigabit backbone network that feeds the broadband equipment throughout Idaho. Fatbeam also said customers are served via direct access fiber, fiber to the home, fixed microwave or broadband radio setups.

In 2001, the Legislature passed a bill allowing companies to receive income tax credit for the installation of qualifying broadband equipment in the state during a calendar year. Qualified broadband equipment is defined as those network facilities capable of transmitting signals at a rate of at least 200,000 bits per second to a subscriber and at least 125,000 bits per second from a subscriber. If the equipment is installed by a telecommunications carrier, it must also be necessary to the provision of broadband services and an integral part of a broadband network.

Additional information is available at: puc.idaho.gov/case/Details/7359.

Filer Mutual Telephone Company

Commission approves telecommunications company's application asking that equipment be recognized as qualified broadband equipment

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has approved an application from Filer Mutual Telephone Company that designates equipment it installed in 2023 is qualified broadband equipment.

Idaho code allows a taxpayer to receive an income tax credit for having installed qualified broadband equipment during a calendar year. Before the taxpayer is eligible for the tax credit, it must apply to the public utilities commission for an order confirming the equipment is qualified broadband equipment as defined in the statute.

The statute states that the equipment is capable of transmitting signals at a rate of at least 200,000 bits per second to a subscriber and at least 125,000 bits per second from a subscriber, and is primarily used to provide services in Idaho to public subscribers. In the case of a telecommunications carrier, qualifying equipment shall be necessary to the provision of broadband service and shall also be an integral part of a broadband network.

Additional information is available at: puc.idaho.gov/case/Details/7308.

Fybercom LLC

Commission approves telecom company's application to offer telecommunication exchange services in Idaho

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has approved an application from Fybercom LLC that will allow it to offer local telecommunication exchange services in Idaho.

The telecom company asked for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity in its application. Fybercom said it is incorporated within the state of Idaho and plans to offer service to businesses that want hosted voice services. Fybercom also plans to resell internet bandwidth that will enable it

to offer several telecom services to customers, including basic telephone service.

The commission approved Fybercom's application after the telecom company submitted additional information regarding its proposed service area.

Additional information is available at: puc.idaho.gov/case/Details/7296.

Idaho Telecommunications Relay Service

Commission accepts annual report, budget for telecommunications service that provides speech to text, video and other services

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has accepted the 2023 annual report and 2024 budget for the Idaho Telecommunications Relay Service, which allows those with hearing or speech disabilities to place and receive telephone calls.

The Idaho Legislature established the Telecommunications Relay Service Act in 1992 in accordance with Title VI of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act. The service allows hearing or speech-impaired individuals to engage in telephone communications "in a manner functionally equivalent to that of individuals without hearing or speech impairments." The service includes a relay center where verbal conversations are converted, or relayed, to text-type and vice versa. The center also provides speech-to-speech, Spanish-to-Spanish, video, and Internet relay services.

The service is funded by assessments on local telephone service (residential and business) access lines and on billed intrastate long-distance minutes. The service is operated by Hamilton Telecommunications, which is reimbursed for in-state relay traffic and captioned telephone services.

The administrator for the service, Kathleen Toohill, reported that the center handled 1,221 calls in 2023, an approximately 11 percent increase from 2022. The service's expenses for 2023 totaled \$141,274. Disbursements to Hamilton were \$101,065. The administrative fees and expenses for 2023 were \$40,080 and the end-of-year fund balance was \$68,872.

Telephone companies reported a 3.0 percent decrease in total intrastate long-distance minutes, from about 60,936,000 minutes in 2022 to about 59,148,700 minutes in 2023. Average monthly telephone lines increased by approximately 1.0 percent, from 87,700 in 2022 to 88,344 in 2023.

The 2023 annual total contribution to the fund was \$112,149, a decrease of \$593 from 2022. In 2023, local exchange services contributed \$53,006. Message telecommunication services and wide area telephone service collectively contributed \$59,149.

Previous orders issued by the commission increased the per-line rate from \$0.03 to \$0.05 effective May 1, 2021, and kept the rate at \$0.05 per line and \$0.001 per long-distance minute.

The annual operating budget for 2024 is projected at \$141,232. This includes administrative fees and expenses, travel and conference costs, the payments to Hamilton and annual membership dues. Based on the proposed budget for 2024 and the 2023 end-of-year reserves, the administrator for the service is presenting four options:

1. Continue the present compensation rates to the TRS fund at \$0.05 per line and \$0.001 per long-distance

line.

2. Continue with the current long distance per minute rate of \$0.001 while raising the per line rate to range somewhere around \$0.07 per line to try and level out contributions to the fund. This would allow the 2024 end- of-balance to come out to an estimated \$45,000-\$50,000.

3. The commission could raise both rates.

4. Staff noted the commission could “look at other creative means of funding beyond landlines and MTS/WATS.”

After reviewing the administrator’s report and staff’s recommendations, the commission found it just and reasonable to adopt the second option. This allows the per minute rate, which appears to be contributing to the fund in a sustainable manner, to remain unchanged while taking a measured step toward sustainability by increasing the per line rate to \$0.07.

Additional information is available at puc.idaho.gov/case/Details/7269 and at [cdhh.idaho.gov/resource- directory/trs/](http://cdhh.idaho.gov/resource-directory/trs/).

Idaho Universal Service Fund

Commission sets yearly rates for Idaho Universal Service Fund

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has set the yearly rates for a fund that helps provide telephone service to Idaho residents.

The Idaho Universal Service Fund was established by the Idaho Legislature through Idaho Code § 62-610 to maintain the universal availability of local exchange service at reasonable rates and promote the availability of message telecommunications service (MTS) at reasonably comparable prices throughout the state. It accomplishes this by taking revenue collected via a surcharge assessed on all land-line users and long-distance call minutes and distributing that revenue to telecommunications carriers that meet certain eligibility requirements.

The fund has an administrator who submits an annual report to the commission that provides information on the fund’s activities and recommending surcharge rates to meet the next year’s funding requirements.

After reviewing the report and commission staff recommendations, the commission set surcharge rates at \$0.24 cents per residential line, \$0.41 cents per business line and \$0.005 cents per message telecommunications service/wide area telephone service. The rates took effect on Oct. 1, 2024, and will last for one year.

The rates reflect a decrease from when they were last set in 2023. Those rates were \$0.25 cents per residential line, \$0.44 cents per business line and \$0.007 cents per intrastate long-distance billed minute.

Additional information on the commission’s decision and the universal service fund is available at: puc.idaho.gov/case/Details/7350. **Infiniti Mobile**

Telecom company applies to commission to receive Eligible Telecommunications Carrier designation

Infiniti Mobile has applied to the Idaho Public Utilities Commission to receive designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier to offer Lifeline service and receive reimbursement from an assistance program.

If approved, the designation would allow Infiniti Mobile to provide Lifeline service to qualifying Idaho customers across the state, including customers on federally recognized tribal lands. Lifeline is a Federal Communications Commission program that provides affordable communications services for low-income customers. Infiniti is asking to receive reimbursement from the Idaho Telephone Service Assistance Program for providing Lifeline. The telecom services it intends to offer include calling and text messaging to broadband access.

The commission is taking written comments on Infiniti's application until March 25, 2024. Comments are required to be filed through the commission's website or by e-mail unless computer access is not available. To submit comments using the commission website, please visit puc.idaho.gov and click on the "Case Comment Form" link on the upper left side of the page. Please use case number IMT-T-23-01 when filling out the form. If using e-mail, comments are required to be sent to the commission secretary and Infiniti at the e-mail addresses listed below and include the commenter's name, address and case number IMT-T-23-01. If computer access is not available, comments can be mailed to the commission and Infiniti at the addresses listed below. Those submitting comments through mail are required to include their name, address and case number IMT-T-23-01.

Additional information is available at: puc.idaho.gov/case/Details/7221.

Terracom Inc.

Commission approves company's application to receive designation as an eligible telecommunications carrier

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission on Tuesday approved an application from Terracom Inc., to receive limited designation as an eligible telecommunications carrier.

The approval will allow Terracom, doing business as Maxsip Tel, to be eligible to receive support from the federal Universal Service Fund. To qualify as an eligible telecommunications carrier, an application must satisfy requirements in federal and state law. The requirements include being a "common carrier" that offers services using its own facilities or a combination of its own facilities and resale of another carrier's services.

State commissions determine if receiving an eligible telecommunications carrier designation is consistent with the public interest, convenience and necessity. When evaluating the public interest element, the commission considers if the carrier contributes to state assistance programs such as the Idaho Telephone Service Assistance Program and the Idaho Telecommunications Relay Services. The commission also considers if the designation is sought for only part of a rural telephone company's study area, which could leave some customers without service.

Other requirements to receive the designation include submission of a plan for proposed improvements or upgrades to a company's network, demonstrated ability to continue offering service in emergencies without an external power source and a demonstrated willingness to satisfy consumer protection and service quality standards as well as a financial and technical capability to provide Lifeline service. Lifeline is a Federal Communications Commission program that helps make communications services more affordable for low-income consumers. Lifeline gives subscribers a discount on qualifying monthly telephone service, broadband Internet, or bundled voice-broadband packages bought from participating wireline or wireless companies.

For companies seeking Lifeline-only eligible telecommunications carrier designation, the Federal Communications Commission has waived the requirement to submit a network improvement and upgrade plan. These eligible telecommunications carriers do not receive funds to improve or extend their networks.

Terracom said it is seeking eligible telecommunications carrier designation in Idaho solely to provide Lifeline service to qualifying customers. It has asked for permission to be reimbursed from the Idaho Telephone Service Assistance Program, which the commission granted.

Additional information is available at puc.idaho.gov/case/Details/7080.

TDS Telecom, Level 3 Communications, LLC

Commission approves interconnection agreement between telecom utilities

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has approved an interconnection agreement between TDS Telecom and Level 3 Communications, LLC.

An interconnection agreement sets out the terms under which local telephone companies do business with each other when they serve the same area. The agreement is designed to eliminate the need for a customer to subscribe to multiple networks in order to be able to communicate with other customers.

Under the terms of the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996, interconnection agreements are required to be submitted to the commission for approval. Telecom companies that enter into interconnection agreements can negotiate terms, prices, and conditions that do not comply with Federal Communications Commission rules or other regulations.

The agreement spells out the terms and conditions for the interconnection of Level 3's network to TDS Telecom's network, and financial compensation for the transport and termination of telecommunications traffic between TDS Telecom and Level 3, among other items.

Additional information is available at: puc.idaho.gov/case/Details/7219.

TruConnect Communications, Inc.

Company files for eligible telecommunications carrier designation in Idaho

TruConnect Communications, Inc. has filed an application with the Idaho Public Utilities Commission seeking approval to receive a designation that will allow it to offer telecommunications services to

low-income consumers in Idaho.

If the commission approves the application, the eligible telecommunications carrier designation will allow TruConnect to provide Lifeline services and participate in the Universal Service Fund for the purpose of providing Lifeline to qualifying customers in Idaho. Lifeline is federal support given to TruConnect to provide telecommunication services to low-income consumers.

TruConnect is seeking approval to participate and receive reimbursement from the Idaho Telephone Service Assistance Program.

The public utilities commission is accepting written comments on TruConnect's application until July 11, 2024. Comments are required to be filed through the commission website or by e-mail unless computer access is not available. To comment electronically, please visit puc.idaho.gov and click on the "Case Comment Form" link on the upper left side of the page. Please use case number TCC-T-24-01 when filling out the form. To comment using e-mail, please send comments to the e-mail addresses listed below. Please use case number TCC-T-24-01. Commenters are required to include their name and address.

Additional information is available at: puc.idaho.gov/case/Details/7280.

ZiPLY Fiber Pacific, LLC

Company applies for eligible telecommunications carrier designation in Idaho

ZiPLY Fiber Pacific, LLC has applied to the Idaho Public Utilities Commission to be designated as an eligible telecommunications carrier in the state.

If approved by the commission, ZiPLY Fiber would be allowed to provide Lifeline services. It is a discount on phone service for qualifying low-income consumers and is intended to ensure the consumers can connect to jobs, family and emergency services. Eligible telecommunications carriers receive reimbursement from the Universal Service Fund and the Idaho Telephone Service Assistance Program.

Those interested in submitting written comments on ZiPLY's application have until July 16 to do so. Comments are required to be filed through the commission's website or by e-mail unless computer access is not available. To comment electronically, please visit puc.idaho.gov and click on the "Case Comment Form" link on the upper left side of the page. Please use case number ZFP-T-24-01 when filling out the form. To comment using e-mail, please send comments to the e-mail addresses listed below. Please use case number ZFP-T-24-01. Commenters are required to include their name and address. If computer access is not available, comments can be mailed to the commission secretary and ZiPLY Fiber at the addresses listed below. Commenters are required to include case number ZFP-T-24-01, their name and address.

Additional information on ZiPLY's application is available at: puc.idaho.gov/case/Details/7304.