

STATE OF IOWA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
UTILITIES BOARD

IN RE: EFFICIENT USE OF TELEPHONE NUMBERING RESOURCES	DOCKET NO. NOI-00-3
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**ORDER REQUIRING NUMBER POOLING TRIALS
IN AREA CODES 515 AND 641**

(Issued April 3, 2001)

By this order, the Utilities Board (Board) initiates thousands-block number pooling trials in the 515 and 641 area codes with the goal of improving the efficiency of telephone number assignment, thereby extending the projected lives of these two area codes.

On July 20, 2000, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), acting pursuant to a petition filed by the Board, delegated to the Board the authority to implement a thousands-block number pooling trial in the 515 area code¹. In re Numbering Resource Optimization Implementation Of Local Competition Provisions Of Telecommunications Act of 1996, 2000 WL 991629 (F.C.C. July 20, 2000) (the FCC Delegation Order). Thousands-block number pooling involves the sharing of local telephone number prefixes, or central office codes, by more than one local

¹ The FCC's order stated that its grant of pooling authority extended to the 515 area code and "to any new area code implemented to relieve an existing area code in which pooling is taking place." (FCC Delegation Order at Paragraph 31). The 515 area code was subsequently split into 515 and 641, so the Board's delegated pooling authority applies to both area codes. The Board recently petitioned the FCC for additional delegated authority for the 319 area code; the FCC has not acted on that petition.

exchange service provider in a particular area. More specifically, it allocates blocks of sequential telephone numbers within the same central office code to different service providers to serve customers within the same rate area. "Rate area" refers to the smallest geographic area used to distinguish rate boundaries. All 10,000 numbers within each NXX continue to be assigned to one rate area but are allocated among multiple service providers at the thousands-block (NXX-X) level. Each assigned service provider is only permitted to assign numbers within the particular thousands-block or blocks allocated to it by the pooling administrator.

The Board's delegated authority is limited in several ways. The Board is only authorized to conduct a trial of number pooling, which will be rolled into the national thousands-block number pooling plan when the national plan reaches these Iowa area codes. The state trials must conform to industry-developed pooling guidelines; only certain companies can be required to participate; and the Board is responsible for the allocation and recovery of industry costs incurred in the trials. Some of these limitations may tend to reduce the effectiveness of the trials, but overall the Board expects the trial will be beneficial.

Qwest Corporation (Qwest) is the only major carrier serving the 515 and 641 area codes that currently has Local Number Portability (LNP) capability. A carrier must be LNP-capable to participate in thousands-block number pooling and the FCC will not allow the Board to require implementation of LNP purely for purposes of pooling. Accordingly, the 515 and 641 trials will effectively be limited to Qwest

exchanges for the foreseeable future. Board staff has had informal discussions with Qwest representatives regarding these trials and the Board understands that August 15, 2001, appears to be a reasonable starting date for the pooling trials. The Board agrees with this assessment and will set that date as the mandatory start date for thousands-block number pooling in 515 and 641.

An interim-pooling administrator is required to conduct the pooling trials. The administrator supports the trial through computer applications, data validation, and preparation of reports necessary to review the effectiveness of the trial. Based on a review of the interim pooling administrator selections made by other states, it is clear there are only two companies that are viable alternatives for administrator. Staff met with representatives of both companies and recommends the Board choose Telcordia Technologies (Telcordia) because Board staff believes Telcordia's approach to the technical aspects of pooling is better suited to Iowa's needs. Specifically, Telcordia's administration system has on-line application and reporting functions, is user-friendly, and operates in real time, all of which make it a better system for Iowa. The Board approves staff's recommendation and selects Telecordia as the interim number pooling administrator.

The remaining issue concerns the cost of the number pooling trials. The Board does not yet have definitive information regarding the total costs that will need to be recovered through a state mechanism, although the data already available to the Board supports the conclusion that number pooling is a cost-effective alternative

to further area code relief proceedings, particularly when all of the societal costs associated with an area code split or overlay are considered. Moreover, the Board is aware that the FCC is in the process of developing a cost recovery mechanism for the national number pooling program, and it would likely be useful to know more about that mechanism when developing a state-specific cost recovery mechanism. Accordingly, the Board will not order any state mechanism at this time, but will instead direct staff to continue to collect information from all of the local exchange carriers as necessary or convenient and to monitor the appropriate FCC proceedings for further developments. If the information from the carriers indicates there is a pressing need for an Iowa-specific cost recovery mechanism, the Board will respond as appropriate, but until that need is demonstrated the Board believes it is most prudent to review the FCC's actions before establishing a state mechanism that may be inconsistent with FCC's plans.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:

1. All LNP-capable local exchange carriers with prefixes in rate centers serving the 515 and 641 area codes are directed to participate in thousands-block number pooling trials in those area codes. Each such carrier shall cooperate with the designated interim-pooling administrator in implementing the requirements of this order.
2. These trials shall be implemented no later than August 15, 2001.

3. Telcordia Technologies is designated as Iowa's interim pooling administrator for purposes of these trials. The initial industry implementation meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 25, 2001, commencing at 9 a.m. in the Board's hearing room at 350 Maple Street, Des Moines, Iowa. Telecordia shall establish, coordinate, and implement thousands-block pooling guidelines, consistent with the industry-developed guidelines, to permit implementation on or before August 15, 2001. In the interim, the Iowa telecommunications service providers, acting through North American Portability Management, LLC, should enter into a contract with Telcordia for payment of Telcordia's fees.

4. The Board retains jurisdiction over this matter to issue such future orders and take such further actions as may be appropriate.

UTILITIES BOARD

/s/ Allan T. Thoms

/s/ Susan J. Frye

ATTEST:

/s/ Judi K. Cooper
Acting Executive Secretary

/s/ Diane Munns

Dated at Des Moines, Iowa, this 3rd day of April, 2001.