

STATE OF IOWA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
UTILITIES BOARD

IN RE ARBITRATION OF:

SPRINT COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY L.P.,

Petitioning Party,

vs.

ACE COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, CLEAR LAKE INDEPENDENT TELEPHONE COMPANY, FARMERS MUTUAL COOPERATIVE TELEPHONE CO. OF SHELBY, FARMERS TELEPHONE COMPANY, FARMERS MUTUAL TELEPHONE COMPANY, GRAND RIVER MUTUAL TELEPHONE CORPORATION, HEART OF IOWA COMMUNICATIONS COOPERATIVE, HEARTLAND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANY OF IOWA d/b/a HICKORYTECH, HUXLEY COMMUNICATIONS, IOWA TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES, INC., d/b/a IOWA TELECOM f/k/a GTE MIDWEST, KALONA COOPERATIVE TELEPHONE, LA PORTE CITY TELEPHONE COMPANY, LOST NATION-ELWOOD TELEPHONE COMPANY, MINBURN TELECOMMUNICATIONS, INC., ROCKWELL COOPERATIVE TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION, SHARON TELEPHONE, SHELL ROCK TELEPHONE COMPANY d/b/a BEVCOMM c/o BLUE EARTH VALLEY TELEPHONE COMPANY, SOUTH CENTRAL COMMUNICATIONS, INC., SOUTH SLOPE COOPERATIVE TELEPHONE COMPANY, SWISHER TELEPHONE COMPANY, VENTURA TELEPHONE COMPANY, INC., VILLISCA FARMERS TELEPHONE COMPANY, WEBSTER CALHOUN COOPERATIVE TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION, WELLMAN COOPERATIVE TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION, AND WEST LIBERTY TELEPHONE COMPANY d/b/a LIBERTY COMMUNICATIONS; NORTH ENGLISH COOPERATIVE TELEPHONE COMPANY and WINNEBAGO COOPERATIVE TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION; CITIZENS MUTUAL TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE, MABEL COOPERATIVE TELEPHONE COMPANY, TITONKA TELEPHONE COMPANY, LYNNVILLE TELEPHONE COMPANY, and SULLY TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION,

Responding Parties.

DOCKET NOS. ARB-05-2
ARB-05-5
ARB-05-6

**ORDER GRANTING EXTENSION OF TIME TO FILE
INTERCONNECTION AGREEMENT**

(Issued April 25 , 2006)

On March 31, 2005, Sprint Communications Company L.P. (Sprint) filed a petition with the Utilities Board (Board) requesting the Board arbitrate certain terms and conditions of a proposed Interconnection Agreement between Sprint and 27 rural incumbent local exchange carriers (RLECs). The petition was filed pursuant to 199 IAC 38.4(3) and 38.7(3) and 47 U.S.C. § 252(b). The petition was identified as Docket No. ARB-05-2.

On August 29, 2005, Sprint filed a petition with the Board requesting arbitration of certain terms and conditions of a proposed Interconnection Agreement between Sprint and North English Cooperative Telephone Company (North English) and Winnebago Cooperative Telephone Association (Winnebago). The petition was filed pursuant to the same provisions of law and has been identified as Docket No. ARB-05-5.

On December 5, 2005, Sprint filed a petition with the Board requesting the arbitration of certain terms and conditions of a proposed Interconnection Agreement between Sprint and Citizens Mutual Telephone Cooperative, Mabel Cooperative Telephone Company, Titonka Telephone Company, Lynnville Telephone Company, and Sully Telephone Association. The petition was filed pursuant to the same provisions of law and has been identified as Docket No. ARB-05-6.

The petition for arbitration in Docket No. ARB-05-6 also requested that the Board consolidate the arbitration requests in Docket Nos. ARB-05-5 and ARB-05-6 with the arbitration requests in Docket No. ARB-05-2 and establish a single procedural schedule, noting that Docket No. ARB-05-2 is an “arbitration proceeding involving the same issues herein, but with different RLECs.” The Board granted the request for consolidation and set a procedural schedule.

On March 24, 2006, the Board issued its Arbitration Order, deciding the issues in each of these dockets. The Board directed the parties to submit interconnection agreements consistent with the order within 30 days.

On April 12, 2006, Sprint filed a motion for clarification, noting that the Board had directed Sprint and the RLECs to work together to make changes to certain inputs needed for the calculation of reciprocal compensation. Sprint indicated in its filing that the parties have engaged in discussions to arrive at a corrected calculation, but that the parties have been unable to resolve a dispute related to the calculation of transport mileage. Sprint requested the Board clarify whether the distance of the interconnection facility between the INS tandem and the RLEC end office should be included in transport mileage for reciprocal compensation purposes. Additionally, Sprint asked that the Board expedite its ruling in order to ensure the parties could file a conforming interconnection agreement on or before April 24, 2006, as directed in the Arbitration Order.

On April 14, 2006, the RLEC group¹ filed a procedural response to Sprint's motion for clarification and requested an extension of time to file a conforming interconnection agreement. In its response, the RLEC group noted that the Board rules allow the RLEC group 14 days in which to respond to the motion filed by Sprint. The RLEC group indicated its intention to file a substantive response on or before April 26, 2006. In order to allow Board time to consider the matter, the RLEC group requested the Board extend the time for filing a conforming interconnection agreement until ten days after an order by the Board deciding the questions raised in Sprint's motion.

On April 18, 2006, Sprint filed a reply to the RLEC group. Sprint asserts that it is unnecessary to extend the time for the parties to file a conforming interconnection agreement, arguing that the Board's guidance on a single narrow issue is all that is necessary.

¹ The RLEC group is comprised of the following: Ace Communications Group, Clear Lake Independent Telephone Company, Farmers Mutual Cooperative Telephone Co. of Shelby, Farmers Telephone Company, Farmers Mutual Telephone Company, Grand River Mutual Telephone Corporation, Heart of Iowa Communications Cooperative, Huxley Communications, Kalona Cooperative Telephone, La Porte City Telephone Company, Lost Nation-Elwood Telephone Company, Minburn Telecommunications, Inc., Rockwell Cooperative Telephone Association, Sharon Telephone, Shell Rock Telephone Company d/b/a BEVCOMM c/o Blue Earth Valley Telephone Company, South Central Communications, Inc., South Slope Cooperative Telephone Company, Swisher Telephone Company, Ventura Telephone Company, Inc., Villisca Farmers Telephone Company, Webster Calhoun Cooperative Telephone Association, Wellman Cooperative Telephone Association, West Liberty Telephone Company, d/b/a Liberty Communications, North English Cooperative Telephone Company, Winnebago Cooperative Telephone Association, Citizens Mutual Telephone Cooperative, Mabel Cooperative Telephone Company, Titonka Telephone Company, Lynnville Telephone Company, and Sully Telephone Company.

The Board finds that it is appropriate to allow the RLEC group the standard 14 days to file its substantive response to Sprint's motion for clarification. Further, Sprint will be allowed ten days following the RLEC group's response to file any reply that it deems appropriate. In those filings, the Board directs both parties to present proposed language that they believe will accomplish the Board's directive from its March 24, 2006, order related to the issue of transport mileage for the purposes of calculating reciprocal compensation.

The Board will grant the request of the RLEC group to extend the deadline for filing a conforming interconnection agreement. The parties will be required to file the conforming interconnection agreement within 15 days following the issuance of a Board order concerning the clarification request.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:

1. The RLEC group is required to file a response to the Sprint motion for clarification on or before April 26, 2006, as discussed in the body of this order.
2. Sprint Communications Company L.P. is directed to file a reply to the RLEC group's response within ten days following the filing of the response, as discussed in the body of this order.

3. Within 15 days of the issuance of an order regarding the substantive issue in the motion for clarification, the parties shall submit an interconnection agreement consistent with the terms of the Board's order on clarification.

UTILITIES BOARD

/s/ John R. Norris

ATTEST:

/s/ Judi K. Cooper
Executive Secretary

/s/ Curtis W. Stamp

Dated at Des Moines, Iowa, this 25th day of April, 2006.