

ELLINGTON TELEPHONE COMPANY RESPONSE

To

Quality of Service Investigation Interrogatories

Missouri Public Service Commission File No. TO-2011-0047

4.A. Does your company own or maintain telecommunications facilities in Missouri? If yes, please answer all of the following questions. If no, then your survey is complete and should be submitted at this point.

ELLINGTON TELEPHONE COMPANY RESPONSE: Yes.

4.B. Does your company track on a regular basis any of the following: If yes, explain how your company tracks it (include whether such information is tracked by exchange or some other area). If no, explain why not.

- i. Timeliness of installing service after a customer orders service.
- ii. Timeliness of repairing service after a customer reports trouble.
- iii. Amount of service trouble.

ELLINGTON TELEPHONE COMPANY RESPONSE: Yes, all of the above on a periodic basis.

In 2008, the company elected to waive the Commission's Quality of Service reporting requirements. The Company's Customer Service staff is very familiar with the Commission's Quality of Service rules, service objective levels, and service surveillance levels; and, the Company's Customer Service staff prepared Quarterly Quality of Service Reports that were filed with the Commission for a period of many years. The Company's customer-accessible business office is centrally located within its five-exchange service area at Ellington, Missouri; therefore, there is a close relationship between the community-based Customer Service staff and the Company's customers. Although the Company tracks Quality of Service levels via its operational support software systems, the Customer Service staff's front line relationship with customers allows the Company to be aware of service issues on a "real-time" basis. The Company's periodic preparation of Quality of Service reports, using the Commission's criteria, allows the Company to assure that its Quality of Service meets the objectives set forth by the Commission.

4.C. Please provide your most recent results for any of the information tracked above.

ELLINGTON TELEPHONE COMPANY RESPONSE: See Attached Quality of Service Summary Report (this report being filed as **Highly Confidential**).

4.D. Explain your company's preventative maintenance procedures. Include in your explanation specific methods you utilize to be certain that telephone equipment and plant is kept in good working condition. State whether your preventative maintenance program is tracked by exchange, area, or state. Please provide results of this measurement for the past two years.

ELLINGTON TELEPHONE COMPANY RESPONSE:

The following comments are directly related to the methods utilized by the Company to assure that its telecommunications plant is kept in good working condition.

The Company believes that proper construction and installation of plant facilities is the most important step in assuring that the service provided to customers is the highest quality possible.

All outside plant construction and maintenance work is performed by the Company's full-time, well-trained employees under the absolute control and supervision of the Company's local managers.

Since the Company does not utilize contractors, quality of workmanship, quality of materials, and customer service is not compromised by awarding contracts to out-of-area, low-bidding contractors.

More than 95% of the Company's backbone and distribution cable network is underground. Underground cable is recognized as the most effective outside plant Quality of Service solution.

All the Company's underground cables were manufactured with water-blocking compounds, also known as "jelly-filled" cable, which assures high service performance and greatly extends the useful life of the cable facilities.

The Company's plant operations are directed and overseen by experienced, local community-based supervisors, including electrical engineers.

Company employees report observations of irregular plant conditions, such as, damaged buried cable pedestals, exposed underground cables, etc.; and, employees report excavating activities, fence building, etc., that pose potential damage to the Company's plant facilities. Such reports are turned in to the Company's plant clerk, and are posted on a bulletin board in the work reporting room for all employees to see. Subsequent to receiving such preventative maintenance reports, the Company issues work orders, cable location orders, or other official orders to address the reported condition. This preventative, pro-

active maintenance approach allows work to be performed before the condition affects service.

Close interaction with Missouri One-Call, and the parties initiating calls to Missouri One-Call, have been very effective in preventing damage to underground facilities.

The Company performs all underground cable locating work with its local, on-staff cable maintenance personnel and is not reliant on out-of-area contractors to perform this work.

The Company's Central Office Switching and Transmission Equipment has built-in performance monitoring and diagnostic testing functionalities. Company technicians and managers continually monitor the output reports generated by the systems and take corrective action, as required.

Ellington Telephone Company has always been very committed to providing high quality of service to its customers. This business philosophy is demonstrated through the efforts of the Company's long-term, caring employees who live within the communities served and who are friends and neighbors of the Company's customers.

The Company does not have a formal preventative maintenance program tracking system.

The Company's excellent plant conditions, preventative maintenance procedures, and overall Quality of Service provided to its customers, is evidenced by the fact that the Commission's Consumer Services Department has recorded no Quality of Service complaints from Company customers in many years.

4.E. What percentage of your company's annual budget is spent on maintaining existing telephone plant?

ELLINGTON TELEPHONE COMPANY RESPONSE:

The Company does not specifically classify maintenance costs in its FCC Compliant accounting system.

Maintenance expenses, both preventive and normal, are recorded in the Plant Specific Expense accounts along with other operating expenses associated with specific types of plant. Although the company believes that a significant portion of its Plant Specific Expenses is spent maintaining its telephone plant, the Company is not able to identify what amount or percentage of its annual budget is spent on maintenance.

4.F. What percentage of your company's annual budget is spent on training its technical staff?

ELLINGTON TELEPHONE COMPANY RESPONSE:

The Company does not have this information available from its FCC Compliant accounting system.