

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

In the Matter of the Application of CenturyTel)
of Missouri, LLC, for Approval of Its Intercon-)
nection, Resale and Unbundling Agreement) **Case No. TK-2003-0357**
with Missouri Telecom, Inc., Under 47 U.S.C.)
§ 252(e).)

ORDER APPROVING INTERCONNECTION AGREEMENT

On March 25, 2003, CenturyTel of Missouri, L.L.C., doing business as CenturyTel, filed an application with the Commission for approval of an interconnection, resale and unbundling agreement with Missouri Telecom, Inc. The agreement was filed pursuant to Section 252(e)(1) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.¹ Missouri Telecom is a telecommunications carrier operating in Missouri.

Although Missouri Telecom is a party to the agreement, it did not join in the application. On March 27, the Commission issued an order making Missouri Telecom a party in this case and directing any party wishing to either request a hearing or to seek intervention to do so no later than April 16, 2003. No requests for hearing or applications for intervention were filed.

The Staff of the Commission filed a Memorandum and Recommendation on April 18, recommending that the agreement be approved.

¹ See 47 U.S.C. § 251, *et seq.*

Discussion

Under Section 252(e) of the Act, any interconnection agreement adopted by negotiation must be submitted to the Commission for approval. The Commission may reject an agreement if it finds that the agreement is discriminatory or that it is not consistent with the public interest, convenience and necessity.

The Staff memorandum recommends that the agreement be approved and notes that the agreement meets the limited requirements of the Act in that it is not discriminatory toward nonparties and is not against the public interest. Staff recommends that the Commission direct the parties to submit any further modifications or amendments to the Commission for approval.

Findings of Fact

The Missouri Public Service Commission, having considered all of the competent and substantial evidence upon the whole record, makes the following findings of fact.

The Commission has considered the application, the supporting documentation, and Staff's Memorandum and Recommendation. Based upon that review, the Commission concludes that the agreement meets the requirements of the Act in that it does not discriminate against a nonparty carrier and implementation of the agreement is not inconsistent with the public interest, convenience and necessity. The Commission finds that approval of the agreement should be conditioned upon the parties submitting any modifications or amendments to the Commission for approval pursuant to the procedure set out below.

Modification Procedure

The Commission has a duty to review all resale and interconnection agreements, whether arrived at through negotiation or arbitration, as mandated by the Act.² In order for the Commission's role of review and approval to be effective, the Commission must also review and approve or recognize modifications to these agreements. The Commission has a further duty to make a copy of every resale and interconnection agreement available for public inspection.³ This duty is in keeping with the Commission's practice under its own rules of requiring telecommunications companies to keep their rate schedules on file with the Commission.⁴

The parties to each resale or interconnection agreement must maintain a complete and current copy of the agreement, together with all modifications, in the Commission's offices. Any proposed modification must be submitted for Commission approval or recognition, whether the modification arises through negotiation, arbitration, or by means of alternative dispute resolution procedures.

Modifications to an agreement must be submitted to the Staff for review. When approved or recognized, the modified pages will be substituted in the agreement, which should contain the number of the page being replaced in the lower right-hand corner. Staff will date-stamp the pages when they are inserted into the agreement. The official record of the original agreement and all the modifications made will be maintained in the Commission's Data Center.

² 47 U.S.C. § 252.

³ 47 U.S.C. § 252(h).

⁴ 4 CSR 240-30.010, redesignated 4 CSR 240-3.545 as of April 30, 2003.

The Commission does not intend to conduct a full proceeding each time the parties agree to a modification. Where a proposed modification is identical to a provision that has been approved by the Commission in another agreement, the Commission will take notice of the modification once Staff has verified that the provision is an approved provision and has prepared a recommendation. Where a proposed modification is not contained in another approved agreement, Staff will review the modification and its effects and prepare a recommendation advising the Commission whether the modification should be approved. The Commission may approve the modification based on the Staff recommendation. If the Commission chooses not to approve the modification, the Commission will establish a case, give notice to interested parties and permit responses. The Commission may conduct a hearing if it is deemed necessary.

Conclusions of Law

The Missouri Public Service Commission has arrived at the following conclusions of law.

The Commission, under the provisions of Section 252(e)(1) of the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996,⁵ is required to review negotiated interconnection agreements. It may only reject a negotiated agreement upon a finding that its implementation would be discriminatory to a nonparty or inconsistent with the public interest, convenience and necessity.⁶ Based upon its review of the agreement between CenturyTel and Missouri Telecom and its findings of fact, the Commission concludes that the agreement is neither discriminatory nor inconsistent with the public interest and should be approved.

⁵ 47 U.S.C. § 252(e)(1).

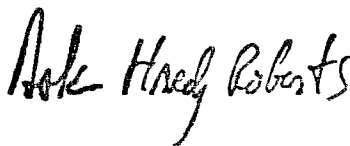
⁶ 47 U.S.C. § 252(e)(2)(A).

The Commission notes that prior to providing telecommunications services in Missouri, a party shall possess the following: (1) an interconnection agreement approved by the Commission; (2) except for wireless providers, a certificate of service authority from the Commission to provide interexchange or basic local telecommunications services; and (3) except for wireless providers, a tariff approved by the Commission.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:

1. That the Interconnection Agreement between CenturyTel of Missouri, L.L.C., doing business as CenturyTel, and Missouri Telecom, Inc., filed on March 25, 2003, is approved.
2. That any changes or modifications to this Agreement shall be filed with the Commission pursuant to the procedure outlined in this order.
3. That this order shall become effective on May 8, 2003.
4. That this case may be closed on May 9, 2003.

BY THE COMMISSION



Dale Hardy Roberts
Secretary/Chief Regulatory Law Judge

(S E A L)

Kevin A. Thompson, Deputy Chief
Regulatory Law Judge, by delegation
of authority pursuant to Section 386.240,
RSMo 2000.

Dated at Jefferson City, Missouri,
on this 28th day of April, 2003.