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BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

In the Matter of the Adoption of the GTE/)
AT&T Communications of the Southwest, Inc.)
Interconnection Agreement by McLeodUSA) Case No. TO-2000-497
Telecommunications Services, Inc. Pursuant)
to Section 252(i) of the Telecommunications)
Act of 1996)

ORDER APPROVING INTERCONNECTION AGREEMENT

On February 16, 2000, GTE Midwest Incorporated (GTE) requested the Commission's approval of the adoption of the existing GTE/AT&T interconnection agreement (the Agreement) by McLeodUSA Telecommunications Services, Inc. (McLeodUSA) and GTE under the provisions of the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 (the Act). GTE stated that McLeodUSA notified GTE that McLeodUSA desired to adopt the terms of the interconnection agreement previously entered into by GTE and AT&T in Case No. TO-97-63. GTE also stated that GTE and McLeodUSA signed short cover letters dated January 31, 2000, and January 28, 2000, respectively, setting forth the terms of the adoption of the Agreement. GTE stated that there are no outstanding issues between GTE and McLeodUSA relating to this adoption of the interconnection agreement between GTE and AT&T and that the Agreement complies with Section 252(i) of the Act. The application stated that the Agreement being adopted was approved by the Commission on July 22, 1998.

An Order and Notice was issued by the Commission on March 1, 2000, requiring any party who wanted to request a hearing or apply to participate without intervention to file a request by March 21, 2000. The Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission (Staff) was directed to file a memorandum advising its position regarding this agreement by March 29, 2000. Staff filed a memorandum on March 27, 2000, recommending the Agreement be approved.

No applications to participate or requests for hearing were filed. The requirement for a hearing is met when the opportunity for hearing has been provided and no proper party has requested the opportunity to present evidence. State ex rel. Rex Deffenderfer Enterprises, Inc. v. Public Service Commission, 776 S.W.2d 494, 496 (Mo. App. 1989). Since no one has requested permission to participate or requested a hearing in this case, the Commission may grant the relief requested based on the application.

Discussion

The Commission, under the provisions of Section 252(e) of the Act, has authority to approve an interconnection agreement negotiated between an incumbent local exchange company (LEC) and a new provider of basic local exchange service. The Commission may reject an interconnection agreement only if the agreement is discriminatory or is inconsistent with the public interest, convenience and necessity.

GTE stated in its application that because it is adopting the Interconnection Agreement made between GTE and AT&T, which has already been approved by the Commission, implementation of the submitted agreement will be consistent with the public interest. Staff stated

in its recommendation that the terms and rate of this Agreement are similar to those contained and approved in other interconnection agreements, with a specific reference to the interconnection agreement between GTE and AT&T approved in Case No. TO-97-63.

The Staff stated in its recommendation that the Agreement meets the limited requirements of the Act in that it does not appear to be discriminatory toward nonparties, and does not appear to be against the public interest, convenience or necessity. Staff recommended approval of the Agreement provided that all modifications to the Agreement be submitted to the Commission for approval. This condition has been applied in prior cases where the Commission has approved similar agreements.

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 recommendation. Based upon that review, the Commission has reached the conclusion that the Agreement meets the requirements of the Act in that it does not unduly 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

This Commission's first duty is to review all resale and interconnection agreements, whether arrived at through negotiation or arbitration, as mandated by the Act. 47 U.S.C. § 252. In order for the Commission's role of review and approval to be effective, the Commission must also review and approve modifications to these agreements. The Commission has a further duty to make a copy of every resale and interconnection agreement available for public inspection. 47 U.S.C. § 252(h). 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 CSR 240-30.010.

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, whether the modification arises through negotiation, arbitration, or by means of alternative dispute resolution procedures.

GTE has provided the Commission with a copy of the resale or interconnection agreement with the pages numbered consecutively in the lower right-hand corner along with its application. Modifications to an agreement must be submitted to the Staff for review. When approved 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 Telecommunications Staff will maintain the official record of the original agreement and all the modifications made in the Commission's tariff room.

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 modification will be approved once Staff has verified that the provision is an approved provision, and prepared a recommendation advising approval. 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, 47 U.S.C. 252(e)(1), is required to review negotiated interconnection or resale 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 under

Section 252(e)(2)(A). Based upon its review of the Agreement between GTE and the McLeodUSA, and its findings of fact, the Commission concludes that the Agreement is neither discriminatory nor inconsistent with the public interest and should be approved.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:

1. That the interconnection agreement between GTE Midwest Incorporated and McLeodUSA Telecommunications Services, Inc. filed on February 16, 2000 is approved.

2. That a copy of the interconnection agreement with the pages numbered seriatim in the lower right-hand corner shall be filed in the tariff room.

3. That any changes or modifications to this agreement shall be filed with the Commission for approval pursuant to the procedure outlined in this order.

4. That this order shall become effective on April 17, 2000.

5. That this case may be closed after April 17, 2000.

BY THE COMMISSION



Dale Hardy Roberts
Secretary/Chief Regulatory Law Judge

(S E A L)

Shelly A. Register, Regulatory Law
Judge, by delegation of authority
pursuant to 4 CSR 240-2.120(1),
(November 30, 1995) and Section 386.240,
RSMo 1994.

Dated at Jefferson City, Missouri,
on this 5th day of April, 2000.