

**OREGON PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
(INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE)**

DATE: August 31, 2016

TO: File through Bryan Conway and Bruce Hellebuyck *BAC*

FROM: Stephen Hayes *SH*

SUBJECT: Frontier Communications Northwest Inc., Docket No. ADV 336/Advice No. SC16-12, Establishes a Special Contract submitted pursuant to ORS 759.250(5).

BACKGROUND

This filing will appear on the Commission's September 13, 2016, public meeting agenda.

Frontier Communications Northwest Inc. (Frontier) proposes to establish a 36-month special contract with a confidential customer for ISDN-PRI, Versaline Centrex, Business Lines and DID Station Numbers. The contract went into effect on July 1, 2016, and it was filed on June 30, 2016. Frontier has asked staff not to divulge the contract customer's name. Pursuant to ORS 759.250, the Commission has 90 days from the date of filing to terminate the effectiveness of a special contract. For this filing, the end of the 90-day statutory period is September 28, 2016.

Description of Contract

The contract is a 36-month, discount arrangement with a confidential customer for the above listed services. Because the Business Line services and the DID services are being provided at the tariffed rate, they are not covered under the special contract Statute. The Business Line service includes the End User FIA rate that is in Frontier's FCC Tariff No. 5. The services are being provided in Oregon under the contract at the following monthly unit rates (compared to the tariffed rates):

	<u>Contract Rate</u>	<u>Tariff Rate</u>	<u>Discount</u>
ISDN – PRI	\$300.00	\$475.00	37%
Versaline Centrex	\$24.99	\$42.00	41%
Business Line	\$34.12	\$34.12	Tariff Rate
DID Station Numbers	\$60.00	\$60.00	Tariff Rate

Description of Services

ISDN is a digital architecture that provides an integrated voice/data capability to the customer premises facility, utilizing the public switched network. ISDN-PRI consists of 23 bearer (B)-channels and one data (D)-channel, for a total transmission rate of 1.544 Megabits per second (Mbps). It is designed for transmission through a DS1 facility. Each 64 Kilobits per second (Kbps) B-channel carries user information such as voice calls, circuit-switched data, or video. The D-channel is a 64 Kbps channel that is used to carry the control or signaling information.

Versaline Centrex Service (Versaline) is a digital central office based switching system that provides premium, versatile, and advanced communication features and service to multi-line business customers. Versaline includes various features and the ability to establish groups of lines with common and/or unique characteristics.

Business line service provides basic calling service consisting of basic access to the network coupled with usage-based pricing of outgoing local calls (local exchange & EAS).

DID Station Numbers provide individual numbers to connect each equipped work station with every other work station for internal conversations and to allow for direct calls to each of those stations from the PSTN without contacting an attendant to be transferred. Translations from switching equipment to those stations must be entered and maintained.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Review Procedures

Although the form of regulation that applies to Frontier changed August 18, 2014, pursuant to ORS 759.255 and the regulatory plan allowed by the Commission under Order No. 14-290 (UM 1677), its services offered through special contracts remain fully regulated. Thus, Frontier special contracts for its regulated services are still subject to ORS 759.250.

Telecommunications utilities are allowed under ORS 759.250 to enter into special contracts with customers without being subject to standard tariff filing procedures under ORS 759.175. In addition, special contracts are not subject to hearings (ORS 759.180) or suspension (ORS 759.185).

ORS 759.250 outlines the requirements for approval of telecommunications special contracts, which are as follows:

1. The contract service must be a new service with limited availability, respond to a unique customer requirement, or be subject to competition.
2. Prices must exceed the long-run incremental cost of providing the service.
3. Telecommunications utilities are required to file special contracts no later than 90 days following the effective date of the contract. Contracts must not exceed five years, and ORS 759.250 does not permit automatic contract renewals.
4. The Commission shall issue an order on the filed contract within 90 days of the filing. If the Commission does not act within 90 days of the filing, the contract is deemed approved. Staff understands that if a telecommunications utility does not provide sufficient evidence to support the contract under ORS 759.250, staff may recommend that the Commission reject the contract.

Classification and Unjust Discrimination Criteria

PUC Order No. 92-651 (Docket UM 254), issued May 1, 1992, adopted procedures and guidelines for telecommunications special contract filings. The order specifies that in assessing special contracts the Commission must consider the reasonableness of the contract rates and whether the rates result in unjust discrimination. The statutes that underlie these areas of concern are ORS 759.210 (classification of service and rates) and ORS 759.260 (unjust discrimination).

Staff's analysis regarding conformance with ORS 759.210 is twofold. First, staff determines if a special contract rate class is developed by the telecommunications utility for one or more of the following reasons: a) the quantity of the contract service used; b) the purpose for which the contract service is used; c) whether price competition or a service alternative exists; d) the contract service being provided; e) the conditions of contract service; or f) other reasonable considerations. Second, staff determines if the special contract results in revenue sufficient to ensure just and reasonable rates for remaining customers (i.e., a "prudency review").

To determine conformance with ORS 759.260, staff determines if the special contract avoids unjust discrimination and is dependent upon the outcome of the analyses outlined above. The statute does not restrict the Commission from subsequent scrutiny of the reasonableness of special contracts for ratemaking purposes.

The company submitted a financial analysis that shows that the proposed rates cover the company's estimated long-run, incremental cost of service (LRIC) for the contract service(s).

Conclusions

Staff has investigated the filing and finds that it complies with Order No. 92-651 (JM 254), the contracted services are subject to competition, the contract price(s) is above the company's cost of service, and the company would offer the discounted contract price(s) to any similarly situated customer requesting it.