

**OREGON PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE**

DATE: December 7, 2021

TO: File through John Crider and Bruce Hellebuyck

FROM: Stephanie Yamada

SUBJECT: CENTURYTEL OF OREGON, INC.:
(Docket No. PL 189/Advice No. 21-009 and Docket No. PL 192/Advice No. 21-010)
Grandfathers the monthly option for Selective Call Accept and standardizes terminology for Custom Ring and Priority Call services.

I have reviewed these filings and recommend that an acknowledgement letter be sent. With these filings, CenturyTel of Oregon, Inc. dba CenturyLink (CenturyTel or Company) standardizes terminology relating to its Custom Ring and Priority Call features and grandfathers the monthly subscription option for Selective Call Accept.

Issue

Whether the price list sheets filed by CenturyTel should be allowed to become effective for service rendered on and after October 22, 2021, and December 7, 2021.

Applicable Rule or Law

Telecommunications utilities are required under ORS 759.175 to submit filings to the Commission whenever they intend to change their rates, terms, or conditions of service.

CenturyTel is regulated under a Price Plan pursuant to ORS 759.255 and Order No. 18-359 in Docket No. UM 1908. Section 8.a.ii of the Price Plan requires CenturyTel to file notice of all price list changes with the Commission at least one day prior to the effective date of the change. Section 8.b.ii of the Price Plan requires CenturyTel to provide 30-day notice of changes to the terms or conditions of pay-per-use services to customers who have used the service within the past 12 months.

Pursuant to OAR 860-032-0020(1)(a), "abandon" means "to discontinue or cease providing." Pursuant to OAR 860-032-0020(1)(d), "grandfather" means "to discontinue or cease offering a service to new customers and to continue offering the service to existing customers." OAR 860-032-0020(1)(k) defines "sunset date" as "the day a telecommunications provider will abandon a grandfathered service being provided to existing customers."

Pursuant to OAR 860-032-0020(15)(a), grandfathering a service without a sunset date is not considered abandonment of service. OAR 860-032-0020(15)(b) allows a telecommunications utility to grandfather a regulated service without a sunset date by filing a tariff which designates the service as grandfathered. Normal filing and review requirements apply to Staff's consideration of such filings, including review for compliance with any applicable Price Plan.

Analysis

Advice No. 21-009

This filing was submitted on October 21, 2021, and became effective on October 22, 2021, in compliance with the filing requirements stated in CenturyTel's Price Plan.

This filing standardizes the name of the Custom Ring service, which was previously shown as "Distinctive Ring" in the Company's Price List. Custom Ring allows a customer to have an additional telephone number assigned to their access line, which rings differently than the primary number. This filing adds language to clarify that the second telephone number does not include a directory listing. The filing also standardizes the name for the Priority Call service, which was previously shown as "VIP Alert" in the Company's Price List. Priority Call allows customers to program a list of numbers from which calls will ring distinctively.

This filing also grandfathers the monthly subscription option for Selective Call Accept, which is an arrangement that allows a subscriber to selectively accept only calls arriving from a list of up to 32 previously identified telephone numbers. Calls from telephone numbers that do not match one of the numbers on the list are routed to an announcement stating that the called party does not wish to receive the call. Effective October 22, 2021, the monthly subscription option for this service is grandfathered to existing lines at existing customer locations.

With this filing, the Company also proposed to grandfather the versions of Selective Call Accept, Selective Call Forward, and Selective Call Rejection that are charged on a per-activation basis. However, Advice No. 21-010 reversed the elimination of the per-activation options for all three services, as explained in more detail below. Consequently, while the monthly option for Selective Call Accept is grandfathered to existing lines in existing customer locations, Selective Call Forward and Selective Call Rejection remain available to all customers on both a monthly and per-activation basis.

No rate changes are proposed with this filing.

Advice No. 21-010

This filing was submitted on December 6, 2021, and became effective on December 7, 2021. This filing re-establishes the availability of the per-activation options for Selective Call Accept, Selective Call Forward, and Selective Call Rejection, and was submitted as a result of discussions between Staff and the Company following the filing of Advice No. 21-009.

As discussed previously, Advice No. 21-009 proposed to eliminate the per-activation option for Selective Call Accept in addition to grandfathering the monthly subscription version. Because customers who previously used the service only on a per-activation basis would no longer have access to the service, with no option to initiate a new monthly subscription, Staff finds that the elimination of the per-activation option would likely be considered abandonment of service. As such, an abandonment petition would likely be required pursuant to OAR 860-032-0020(7). Staff notes that no abandonment petition would be necessary in the case that the per-activation service had not been used by any customer within the past 12 months; OAR 860-032-0020(8) specifies that services for which there are “no current customers” may be abandoned by filing a tariff change designating the service as such.

Although Advice No. 21-009 also proposed to eliminate the per-activation options for Selective Call Forward and Selective Call Rejection, the monthly options would continue to be available to all customers. As such, Staff’s position is that the elimination of those services should not be considered abandonment. However, pursuant to CenturyTel’s Price Plan, the elimination of the per-activation options would require 30-day notice to customers who have used the service within the past 12 months.

Staff notified the Company that an abandonment petition and additional customer notice may be necessary to eliminate the affected per-activation services from the Price List, and the Company subsequently submitted Advice No. 21-010 to re-establish the availability of those services. The Company will determine whether the services have been used within the past 12 months and may make an additional filing to eliminate these services at a later date after notifying customers and receiving additional Commission approvals as may be necessary.

Conclusion

This filing complies with applicable laws and the provisions of CenturyTel’s Price Plan. The filed price list sheets have already gone into effect, and an acknowledgement letter should be sent.