

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
OF OREGON**

UM 1325

In the Matter of)	
)	
WANTEL, INC., dba COMSPAN)	ORDER
COMMUNICATIONS)	
)	
Application for Designation as an Eligible)	
Telecommunications Provider (ETP))	
Providing Services to Customers Under the)	
Federal Lifeline/Link Up Program and the)	
State of Oregon Telephone Assistance)	
Program (OTAP).)	

DISPOSITION: APPLICATION APPROVED

On June 15, 2007, Wantel, Inc., dba ComSpan Communications (Wantel), filed an application with the Public Utility Commission of Oregon (Commission), requesting designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Provider (ETP), pursuant to OAR 860-033-0005. Designation as an ETP will authorize Wantel to participate in the federal Lifeline/Link Up program, as well as the Oregon Telecommunications Assistance Program (OTAP). A description of the Lifeline/Link Up program and the OTAP is contained in Staff's Report, attached as Appendix A, and incorporated by reference.

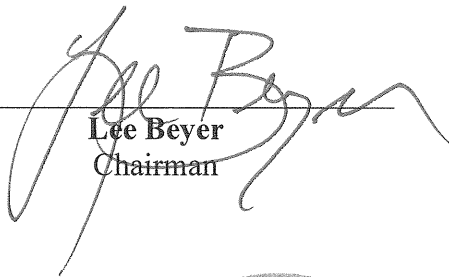
In order to be designated as a state ETP and to participate in OTAP, a telecommunications service provider must comply with federal requirements contained in C.F.R. § 54.101 and must comply with OAR 860-033-0005 through OAR 860-033-0100. Commission Staff finds that Wantel satisfies the requirements to become an ETP for the purposes of providing OTAP and Lifeline/Link Up benefits, as further provided in Attachment A.

At its Public Meeting on September 11, 2007, the Commission adopted Staff's recommendation and approved Wantel's application for designation as an ETP.

ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that Wantel Inc.'s application for designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Provider, in order to provide service to customers under the federal Lifeline/Link Up program and the State of Oregon Telecommunications Assistance Program, is approved.

Made, entered, and effective SEP 18 2007.



Lee Beyer
Chairman



John Savage
Commissioner



Ray Baum
Commissioner



A party may request rehearing or reconsideration of this order pursuant to ORS 756.561. A request for rehearing or reconsideration must be filed with the Commission within 60 days of the date of service of this order. The request must comply with the requirements in OAR 860-014-0095. A copy of any such request must also be served on each party to the proceeding as provided by OAR 860-013-0070(2). A party may appeal this order by filing a petition for review with the Court of Appeals in compliance with ORS 183.480-183.484.

**PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF OREGON
STAFF REPORT
PUBLIC MEETING DATE: September 11, 2007**

REGULAR _____ CONSENT X EFFECTIVE DATE September 11, 2007

DATE: August 31, 2007

TO: Public Utility Commission

FROM: Jon Cray, RSPF Manager

THROUGH: Rick Willis  and David Poston 

SUBJECT: WANTEL INC.: Designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Provider, Providing Services to Customers Under the Federal Lifeline/Link-Up Program and the State of Oregon Telephone Assistance Program (OTAP).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Commission grant Wantel Inc.'s request to be designated as an Eligible Telecommunications Provider (ETP) pursuant to Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 860-033-0005 in the Coquille wire center. Granting the petition will authorize Wantel Inc. to participate in the Federal Lifeline/Link-Up Program, as well as the Oregon Telephone Assistance Program in the Coquille wire center.

DISCUSSION:

A. The Application of Wantel Inc.

Commission Order No. 07-210 designated Wantel Inc. a federal eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) on May 29, 2007, in the Coquille wire center. The company now seeks designation as an ETP in order to participate in the Federal Lifeline/Link-Up Program and the State of Oregon Telephone Assistance Program (OTAP) in the Coquille wire center. The corporation submitted their application to provide OTAP services in Coquille, Oregon on June 15, 2007. Wantel Inc., doing business as Comspan Communications, is a Southern Oregon based telecommunications provider. Wantel Inc. is currently authorized as a federal ETC and participates in OTAP in the Bandon, Oakland, Roseburg, Sutherlin, and Winston wire centers.

UM 1307, Wantel Inc.
August 20, 2007
Page 2

B. The Federal Lifeline/Link-Up Program

The Federal Lifeline/Link-Up Program is a Universal Service Fund (USF) supported mechanism designed to increase the availability of telecommunications services to low-income customers.

The Lifeline portion of the Lifeline/Link-Up Program reimburses telephone companies for providing low-income customers with a discount on the cost of basic residential local exchange service. Lifeline support enables low-income customers to save up to \$13.50 with OTAP contributing \$3.50 per month. Customers living on tribal lands may qualify for alternate Lifeline discounts based on their area of tribal residence.

The Link-Up portion of the Lifeline/Link-Up Program reimburses telephone companies for providing low-income customers with a discount on the cost of connecting their basic residential local exchange service. Link-Up support enables low-income customers to save up to 50% on connection fees or up to \$30. Participants may also establish a deferred payment schedule for remaining connection charges of up to \$200.

Telecommunications service providers provide funding for Federal Lifeline/Link-Up. Carriers are required to contribute a percentage of their interstate revenues towards federal USF mechanisms, including high cost support and rural healthcare programs. Most telecommunications service providers pass this cost on to their customers via a surcharge on end user bills.

C. Oregon Telephone Assistance Program

In 1987, the Commission established OTAP in response to the law enacted by the Oregon Legislature stating that all Oregonians have a right to access basic telecommunication services under the Residential Service Protection Fund (RSPF). OTAP is one of four telecommunication assistance programs outlined in Chapter 290, Oregon Laws 1987.

OTAP is administered by Commission staff and serves as an additional source of support to the Lifeline portion of the Federal Lifeline/Link-Up Program. The state contributed \$3.50 per eligible consumer for basic local exchange telephone service, while the federal government contributes up to \$10 per customer.

Currently, there are 33 ILEC companies, 1 CLEC and 3 wireless companies participating in the OTAP and Federal Lifeline/Link-Up Program. Approximately 56,000 low-income customers in Oregon currently receive OTAP and Lifeline support.

UM 1307, Wantel Inc.
August 20, 2007
Page 3

D. Oregon Telephone Assistance Program

In states that maintain their own low-income support programs, the FCC requires customers to meet state eligibility requirements in order to receive Federal Lifeline/Link-Up support. In states that do not have their own income support programs, customers are required to meet default federal eligibility requirements. In Oregon, customers are eligible to receive OTAP and Lifeline/Link-Up assistance if they are currently receiving federal food stamps or assistance from another low-income program for which eligibility requirements do not exceed 135% of the federal poverty level. In addition to food stamps, customers receiving assistance such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income or coverage under an approved medical program may qualify.

E. The Federal ETC Designation Process

Before a telecommunications service provider can receive federal USF support (whether high cost support or Lifeline/Link-Up), it must be designated as a federal ETC by a state public utility commission. On May 29, 2007, Wantel Inc. was granted an ETC designation in the Coquille wire center by the Commission through Order No. 07-210, Docket UM 1307.

F. The State ETP Designation Process

In order to be designated as a state ETP to participate in OTAP, a telecommunications service provider must comply with the federal requirements contained in C.F.R. § 54.101. The applicant must also demonstrate that it will comply with OAR 860-033-0005 through OAR 860-033-0100, which includes the rules applicable to OTAP. Wantel Inc. filed its completed OTAP ETP Application form on June 15, 2007. The application is attached to this memo.

Staff found that the application was complete and responsive. As part of the application, Wantel Inc. agreed to abide by the PUC Oregon Administrative Rules pertaining to OTAP. These rules specifically apply to procedures for approving, denying and terminating OTAP recipients, timelines for submitting reports, requirements regarding customer confidentiality and expectations pertaining to Link-Up. In summary, Wantel Inc. has satisfied the requirements to provide OTAP to their qualifying customers.

UM 1307, Wantel Inc.
August 20, 2007
Page 4

PROPOSED COMMISSION MOTION:

Approve Wantel Inc.'s application for designation as an ETP, so it can provide services to customers under the Federal Lifeline/Link-Up Program and the State of Oregon Telephone Assistance Program in the Coquille wire center.