State of Florida



Public Service Commission

CAPITAL CIRCLE OFFICE CENTER • 2540 SHUMARD OAK BOULEVARD TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0850

-M-E-M-O-R-A-N-D-U-M-

DATE: DECEMBER 5, 2001

TO: DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF THE COMMISSION CLERK &

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES (BAYÓ)

FROM: DIVISION OF COMPETITIVE SERVICES (FONDO/M. WATTS)

DIVISION OF LEGAL SERVICES (TEITZMAN)

RE: COMPLIANCE INVESTIGATION FOR APPARENT VIOLATION OF

SECTION 364.183(1), F.S., ACCESS TO COMPANY RECORDS.

DOCKET NO. 011546-TX - TOWER COMMUNICATIONS, INC. D/B/A

UNITED SOUTHERN TELECOM

DOCKET NO. 011547-TX - TRISTAR COMMUNICATIONS

DOCKET NO. 011549-TX - TWENTY EIGHT RED, INC. D/B/A CASH

AMERICA

DOCKET NO. 011550-TX - U.S. DIAL TONE, INC.

DOCKET NO. 011552-TX - UNITED STATES TELECOMMUNICATIONS,

INC. D/B/A TEL COM PLUS

DOCKET NO. 011553-TX - US LEC OF FLORIDA INC.

DOCKET NO. 011554-TX - USA DIGITAL, INC.

DOCKET NO. 011555-TX - USA QUICK PHONE, INC.

DOCKET NO. 011589-TX - TELERA COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

AGENDA: 12/17/2001 - REGULAR AGENDA - PROPOSED AGENCY ACTION -

INTERESTED PERSONS MAY PARTICIPATE

CRITICAL DATES: NONE

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: NONE

FILE NAME AND LOCATION: S:\PSC\CMP\WP\011546.RCM

DOCKET NOS. 011546-TX, 011547-TX, 011549-TX, 011550-TX, 011553-TX, 011554-TX, 011555-TX, 011589-TX

DATE: DECEMBER 5, 2001

CASE BACKGROUND

- July 6, 2001 Staff mailed a certified letter, return receipt requested, to each of the certificated Alternative Local Exchange Company (ALEC) providers listed in Attachment A. Staff's letter requested information necessary for inclusion in the local competition report required of the Commission by Section 364.386, Florida Statutes, Reports to the Legislature. Staff's letter emphasized that responses were due no later than August 17, 2001, and that failure to respond could result in the Commission assessing penalties pursuant to Section 364.285(1), Florida Statutes.
- July 9-11, 2001 The certified letter return receipts (Attachment B) from the July 6, 2001, mailings were signed by each of the companies listed in Attachment A.
- October 29, 2001 None of the companies listed in Attachment A provided responses to staff's July 6, 2001, certified letter.

The Commission is vested with jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to Sections 364.183, 364.285, and 364.386, Florida Statutes. Accordingly, staff believes the following recommendations are appropriate.

DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

ISSUE 1: Should the Commission fine each of the companies listed in Attachment A \$5,000 or cancel each company's respective certificate, as listed in Attachment A, for apparent failure to provide the Commission access to information pursuant to Section 364.183(1), Florida Statutes, Access to Company Records?

RECOMMENDATION: Yes. The Commission should fine each of the companies listed in Attachment A \$5,000 or cancel each company's respective certificate, as listed in Attachment A, if the fine is not received by the Commission within five business days after the issuance of the Consummating Order. The fine should be paid to the Florida Public Service Commission and forwarded to the Office of the Comptroller for deposit in the General Revenue Fund pursuant to Section 364.285(1), Florida Statutes. If the Commission's Order is not protested and the fine is not received within five business days after the issuance of the Consummating Order, then each certificate should be canceled respective company's administratively. (FONDO/M.WATTS/TEITZMAN)

STAFF ANALYSIS: Pursuant to Section 364.285, Florida Statutes, the Commission may impose a fine or cancel a certificate if a company refuses to comply with Commission rules or statutes. Section 364.183(1), Florida Statutes, Access to Company Records, states:

364.183 Access to company records. --

(1) The commission shall have access to all records of a telecommunications company that are reasonably necessary for the disposition of matters within the commission's jurisdiction. The commission shall also have those records of local a telecommunications company's affiliated companies, including its parent company, that are reasonably necessary for the disposition of any matter concerning an affiliated transaction or a claim of anticompetitive behavior including claims of cross-subsidization and predatory pricing. The commission may require a telecommunications company to file records, reports or other data directly related to matters within the commission's jurisdiction in the form specified by the

commission and may require such company to retain such information for a designated period of time. Upon request of the company or other person, any records received by the commission which are claimed by the company or other person to be proprietary confidential business information shall be kept confidential and shall be exempt from s. 119.07(1) and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution.

Based on the certified letter return receipts (Attachment B) staff received from the United States Postal Service, it appears that the companies listed in Attachment A received the data request and could have responded. It is imperative that the Commission receive 100% participation to accurately reflect the status of local telecommunications competition to the Legislature. Staff requested the information in order to comply with Section 364.386, Florida Statutes, Reports to the Legislature, which states in part:

364.386 Reports to the Legislature. --

- (1) The commission shall submit to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the majority and minority leaders of the Senate and the House of Representatives, on December 1, 1996, and on an annual basis thereafter, a report on the status of competition in the telecommunications industry and a detailed exposition of the following:
- (a) The overall impact of local exchange telecommunications competition on the continued availability of universal service.
- (b) The ability of competitive providers to make functionally equivalent local exchange services available to both residential and business customers at competitive rates, terms, and conditions.
- (c) The ability of consumers to obtain functionally equivalent services at comparable rates, terms, and conditions.
- (d) The overall impact of price regulation on the maintenance of reasonably affordable and reliable high-quality telecommunications services.
- (e) What additional services, if any, should be included in the definition of basic local telecommunications

services, taking into account advances in technology and market demand.

(f) Any other information and recommendations which may be in the public interest.

By Section 364.285, Florida Statutes, the Commission is authorized to impose upon any entity subject to its jurisdiction a penalty of not more than \$25,000 for each offense, if such entity is found to have refused to comply with or to have willfully violated any lawful rule or order of the Commission, or any provision of Chapter 364. Utilities are charged with knowledge of the Commission's rules and statutes. Additionally, "it is a common maxim, familiar to all minds, that 'ignorance of the law' will not excuse any person, either civilly or criminally." Barlow v. United States, 32 U.S. 404, 411 (1833).

Staff believes that the conduct of each of the companies listed in Attachment A, by not providing staff access to company records, in apparent violation of Section 364.183(1), Florida Statutes, has been "willful" in the sense intended by Section 364.285, Florida Statutes. In Order No. 24306, issued April 1, 1991, in Docket No. 890216-TL, In re: Investigation Into The Proper Application of Rule 25-14.003, F.A.C., Relating to Tax Savings Refund for 1988 and 1989 for GTE Florida, Inc., having found that the company had not intended to violate the rule, the Commission nevertheless found it appropriate to order it to show cause why it should not be fined, stating that "In our view, willful implies intent to do an act, and this is distinct from intent to violate a rule." Thus, any intentional act, such as the conduct of each of the companies listed in Attachment A at issue here, would meet the standard for a "willful violation."

The companies listed in Attachment A did not respond to the Commission's request for information. All of the companies listed in Attachment A have been certificated in Florida since at least October 20, 2000. Some of the companies have not reported any revenues and are apparently not providing telecommunications services in Florida. Nevertheless, they are still subject to the Commission's rules and Florida Statutes governing Alternative Local Exchange Companies.

Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission should fine each of the companies listed in Attachment A \$5,000 or cancel each company's respective certificate, as listed in Attachment A, if the fine is not received by the Commission within five business days after the issuance of the Consummating Order. The fine should be paid to the Florida Public Service Commission and forwarded to the Office of the Comptroller for deposit in the General Revenue Fund pursuant to Section 364.285(1), Florida Statutes. If the Commission's Order is not protested and the fine is not received within five business days after the issuance of the Consummating Order, then each company's respective certificate should be canceled administratively.

ISSUE 2: Should these dockets be closed?

RECOMMENDATION: The Order issued from this recommendation will become final upon issuance of a Consummating Order, unless a person whose substantial interests are affected by the Commission's decision files a protest within 21 days of the issuance of the Proposed Agency Action Order. The dockets should then be closed upon receipt of the fines or cancellation of the certificates. A protest in one docket should not prevent the action in a separate docket from becoming final. (TEITZMAN)

STAFF ANALYSIS: Whether staff's recommendation on Issue 1 is approved or denied, the result will be a Proposed Agency Action Order. If no timely protest to the Proposed Agency Action is filed within 21 days of the date of the issuance of the Order, these dockets should be closed upon receipt of the fines or cancellation of the certificates. A protest in one docket should not prevent the action in a separate docket from becoming final.

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DATE: DECEMBER 5, 2001

Docket No.	Company	Code	Certification No.	Certification Date	Reported Revenue 2000
011546-TX	Tower Communications, Inc. d/b/a United Southern Telecom	TX319	7063	8/3/ 99	\$0.00
011547-TX	Tristar Communications	TX128	54 50	10/22/ 97	\$5,169.40
011549-TX	Twenty Eight Red, Inc. d/b/a Cash America	TX396	7331	3/2/00	\$0.00
011550-TX	U.S. Dial Tone, Inc.	TX177	561 0	4/18/9 8	\$0.00
011552-TX	United States Telecommunications, Inc. d/b/a Tel Com Plus	TX182	558 6	5/26/9 8	\$1,642,708.6 6
011553-TX	US LEC of Florida Inc.	TX165	5311	1/13/9 8	\$4,368,654.00
011554-TX	USA Digital, Inc.	TX417	73 85	3/29/ 00	\$0.00
011555-TX	USA Quick Phone, Inc.	TX208	56 58	8/4/9 8	\$0.00
011589-TX	Telera Communications, Inc.	TX505	75 93	10/20/ 00	\$0.00

SENDER: DOMPLETE THIS SECTION	DOMPLETE THIS SECTION ON DELIVERY		
 Complete items 1, 2, and 3. Also complete item 4 if Restricted Delivery is desired. Print your name and address on the reverse so that we can return the card to you. Attach this card to the back of the mailpiece, or on the front if space permits. 1. Article Addressed to: Jnited Southern Telecom *X319 • O. Box 5476 Gainesville, FL 32627-5476 	A. Received by (Please Print Clearly) San Jona Bury C. Signature X		
Gaines	3. Service Type Certified Mall Registered Return Receipt for Merchandise C.O.D.		
TX 319	4. Restricted Delivery? (Extra Fee) Yes		
2, Article Number (Copy from service label)	414566		
PS Form 3811, July 1999 Domestic Retu	rn Receipt 102595-00-M-0952		

SENDER: DOMPLETE THIS SECTION	DOMPLETE THIS	SECTION ON DEL	IVERY
 Complete items 1, 2, and 3. Also complete item 4 if Restricted Delivery is desired. Print your name and address on the reversor that we can return the card to you. Attach this card to the back of the mallplicor on the front if space permits. 1. Article Addressed to: Tristar Communications TX128 3350 N.W. 22nd Terrace, Suite 1100-B Pompano Beach, FL 33069-5911 	C. Signature C. Signature D. Is delivery addre	X)	
Pompano Beach, 12 or	3. Service Type Certified Mall Registered Insured Mall 4. Restricted Delive	☐ Return Rece ☐ C.O.D.	II elipt for Merchandise
2. Article Number (Copy from service label)	Wo4141034	<u> </u>	102595-00-M-09 5 2

DATE: DECEMBER 5, 2001

ATTACHMENT B

1	A Company of the Comp
SENDER: COMPLETE THIS SECTION	COMPLETE THIS SECTION ON DELIVERY
Complete items 1, 2, and 3. Also complete item 4 if Restricted Delivery is desired. Print your name and address on the reverse so that we can return the card to you. Attach this card to the back of the mailpiece, or on the front if space permits.	Received by (Please Print Clearly) B. Date of Delivery Rhonda Welliny C. Clanature Agent Addressee D. Is delivery address different from them 12 2 Yes
Cash America TX396 P. O. Box 1087	D. is delivery address different from item 11 Yes If YES, enter delivery address below:
Niceville, FL 32599-1087	3. Service Type Certified Mail Express Mail 8 / 9 7 5 Registered Return Receipt for Merchandise Insured Mail C.O.D.
TX 396	4. Restricted Delivery? (Extra Fee) Yes
2. Article Number (Copy from service lebel)	itsayst III I II IIIII
PS Form 3811, July 1999 Domestic	Return Receipt 102595-00-M-0952

SENDER: COMPLETE THIS SECTION	COMPLETE THIS SECTION ON DELIVERY
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5. Dial Tone, Inc. (177 705 I.H. 10 West, Suite 300 Amonio, TX 78257-1158	
5. Dial Tone, Inc. (177 705 J.H. 10 West, Suite 300 705 Antonio, TX 78257-1158	3. Service Type 2 Certified Mail

DATE: DECEMBER 5, 2001

SENDER: COMPLETE THIS SECTION	COMPLETE THIS SECTION ON DELIVERY
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arwater, FL 33760-4837	3. Service Type Certified Mail
TX182	4. Restricted Delivery? (Extra Fee)
 SENDER: COMPLETE THIS SECTION Complete items 1, 2, and 3. Also complete item 4 if Restricted Delivery is desired. Print your name and address on the reverse so that we can return the card to you. Attach this card to the back of the mailpiece, 	C. Signature 1 D. Agent
Complete items 1, 2, and 3. Also complete item 4 if Restricted Delivery is desired. Print your name and address on the reverse so that we can return the card to you. Attach this card to the back of the mailpiece, or on the front if space permits. 1. Article Addressed to: EC of Florida Inc. US LEC.	A. Received by (Please Print Clearly). B. Date of Deliver 7/9/01 Dec
 Complete items 1, 2, and 3. Also complete item 4 if Restricted Delivery is desired. Print your name and address on the reverse so that we can return the card to you. Attach this card to the back of the mailpiece, or on the front if space permits. 1. Article Addressed to: EC of Florida Inc. 	A. Received by (Please Print Clearly). B. Date of Deliver 7/9/01 Due C. Signature
Complete items 1, 2, and 3. Also complete item 4 if Restricted Delivery is desired. Print your name and address on the reverse so that we can return the card to you. Attach this card to the back of the mailpiece, or on the front if space permits. 1. Article Addressed to: EC of Florida Inc. US LEC.	A. Received by (Please Print Clearly). B. Date of Deliver 79/01 Duc. C. Signature Address D. Is delivery address of terror from item 1? Yes If YES, enter delivery address below: No 3. Service Type Greatified Mail Express Mail Registered Return Receipt for Merchandis
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, FL 33672-0574	3. Service Type Certified Mail Registered Return Receipt for Merchandis Insured Mail C.O.D.
TX 417	4. Restricted Delivery? (Extra Fee)
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Fich Phone, Inc. 16th Street port, TX 76426-2101	3. Service Type
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TX 208	4. Restricted Delivery? (Extra Fee)
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ATTACHMENT B

DOCKET NOS. 011546-TX, 011547-TX, 011549-TX, 011550-TX, 011552-TX, 011553-TX, 011554-TX, 011555-TX, 011589-TX

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tra Communications, Inc. 505 D East Hamilton Avenue, Suite 200 DEAST HAMILTON AVENUE, Suite 200	GALEN C
b) East Hamilton Avenue ampbell, CA 95008-0625	3. Service Type Certified Mell Express Ma Registered Return Receipt for Merchandise Insured Mail
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