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K R A S K I N, L E S S E & C O S S O N, L L P
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RECEIVED

MAR - 8 2002

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

March 8, 2002

Jeffrey Dygert
Assistant Chief, Common Carrier Bureau
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: CC Docket 96-262, Sprint payment of interstate access charges.

Dear Mr. Dygert:

In accordance with your request I am responding to the February 26, 2002 letter to you from Richard Juhnke of Sprint regarding Sprint payment of interstate access charges to several rural CLEC members of the Rural Independent Competitive Alliance ("RICA"). RICA is pleased that Sprint recognizes its obligations to pay access rates tariffed at the levels established by the Commission in the CLEC Access Reform Order.

In regard to HTC Communications, Sprint is correct that it has paid interstate access charges after June 19, 2001 in full. Sprint acknowledges that it has not paid in full for service rendered prior to June 20, 2001, but asserts, in effect, that the rates were excessive. The Commission's *Declaratory Ruling* of last October made clear that while IXCs are free to challenge the lawfulness of a CLEC's tariffed rate for that period, the tariffed rate must be paid until found unlawful. HTC is willing to consider Sprint's current letter as a complaint about its pre-June 20, 2001 rates and to begin negotiation of a resolution of such a complaint.

Sprint is also correct that its bills for interstate access are now current with CTC Telecom, Inc. Sprint has recently clarified that its partial payments of CTC Telecom's access bill were intended to pay the interstate access charges in full, but not the intrastate access charges.

Sprint asserts that it has no record of being billed by PTSI for interstate access. It is not clear why Sprint cannot find these bills. Attached are copies of PTSI's bills to Sprint beginning

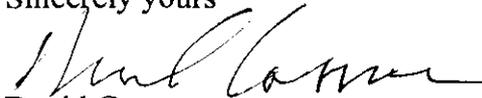
Jeffrey Dygert
March 8, 2002

with September, 2001. These bills were mailed to the same address that PTSI's parent ILEC sends bills which are paid. None of these bills were returned by Sprint or the Postal Service.

We appreciate that Sprint, unlike some other IXCs, has properly determined for itself that CLECs, such as Mid-Rivers and Consolidated, are eligible to establish rates at the rural benchmark. RICA does not accept, however, the proposition that an IXC's obligation to pay a CLEC at the rural benchmark is contingent upon the IXC receiving additional representations that the CLEC is qualified to file a tariff at the rural benchmark level beyond the filing of a tariff and rendering of a bill. This is not to suggest that CLEC's are not obligated to respond to reasonable requests for information, or that IXCs may not file a complaint alleging that a CLEC's rates are not consistent with the CLEC Access Reform Order. It is however, an unreasonable practice for a IXC to withhold payment without raising any such issue when the tariff is filed, or at least when the first bill is received.

RICA appreciates your efforts to resolve these issue in a prompt and efficient manner and stands ready to respond to any further inquires.

Sincerely yours



David Cosson

Stephen G. Kraskin

Counsel to Rural Independent Competitive Alliance

Attachment

cc: Richard Juhnke, Sprint
William F. Caton, Acting Secretary

**PANHANDLE TELECOMMUNICATION SYSTEMS, INC.**

An Affiliate of PANHANDLE TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE, INC.

RON STRECKER
Chief Executive Officer

September 14, 2001

Sprint Communications
Access Verification
6500 Sprint Parkway
Overland Park, Kansas 66251

Dear Interexchange Carrier:

Enclosed please find your first switched access billing from Panhandle Telecommunication Systems, Inc. We are a CLEC serving the Perryton, Texas exchange (CLLI code PYTNTX04RS0). This billing concurs with the FCC approved and tariffed access rates for competitive local exchange carriers, and reflects the approved state access rates from our Texas tariff, which mirror those of the ILEC serving the exchange. You will continue to receive this billing on a monthly basis and the bills are due within 30 days of the bill date.

If further information is needed, or if you have any questions, please call me at (580) 338-2556.

Sincerely,

Robert Rozell
ControllerRr:kw
Enclosures

REMIT TO:

Panhandle Telecommunication Systems, In US Sprint - Access Verification
P.O. Box 511 6500 Sprint Parkway
Guymon OK 73942-0000 Overland Park KS 66251-0000

BILLING ACCOUNT 6944D0333
INVOICE NO D0333010913
BAR
BACR
BILL DATE Sep 20, 2001
DUE DATE Oct 21, 2001
PAGE 1

BILLING INQUIRIES CALL:

SWITCHED ACCESS SERVICE
FEATURE GROUP D

Meet Point Billing

*** BALANCE DUE INFORMATION ***

TOTAL AMOUNT OF LAST BILL 0.00
PAYMENTS APPLIED 0.00
TOTAL BALANCE DUE 0.00

*** DETAIL OF CURRENT CHARGES ***

LATE PAYMENT CHARGES 0.00
USAGE CHARGES 299.14
 INTERSTATE 299.14
 INTRASTATE
TOTAL CURRENT CHARGES 299.14

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE On Or Before 10/21/01 299.14

REMIT TO:

Panhandle Telecommunication Systems, In US Sprint - Access Verification
P.O. Box 511 6500 Sprint Parkway
Guymon OK 73942-0000 Overland Park KS 66251-0000

BILLING ACCOUNT 6944D0333

INVOICE NO D0333011011

BAR

BACR

BILL DATE Oct 20, 2001

DUE DATE Nov 20, 2001

PAGE 1

BILLING INQUIRIES CALL:

SWITCHED ACCESS SERVICE
FEATURE GROUP D

Meet Point Billing

*** BALANCE DUE INFORMATION ***

TOTAL AMOUNT OF LAST BILL	299.14
PAYMENTS APPLIED	0.00
TOTAL BALANCE DUE	299.14

*** DETAIL OF CURRENT CHARGES ***

LATE PAYMENT CHARGES	0.00
USAGE CHARGES	267.65
INTERSTATE	227.20
INTRASTATE	40.45
TOTAL CURRENT CHARGES	267.65
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE On Or Before 11/20/01	566.79

REMIT TO:

Panhandle Telecommunication Systems, In US Sprint - Access Verification
P.O. Box 511 6500 Sprint Parkway
Guymon OK 73942-0000 Overland Park KS 66251-0000

BILLING ACCOUNT 6944D0333

INVOICE NO D0333011119

BAR

BACR

BILL DATE Nov 20, 2001

DUE DATE Dec 21, 2001

PAGE 1

BILLING INQUIRIES CALL: Kelley Wells (580) 338-2556

Meet Point Billing

SWITCHED ACCESS SERVICE
FEATURE GROUP D

*** BALANCE DUE INFORMATION ***

TOTAL AMOUNT OF LAST BILL	566.79
PAYMENTS APPLIED	0.00
TOTAL BALANCE DUE	566.79

*** DETAIL OF CURRENT CHARGES ***

LATE PAYMENT CHARGES	0.00
USAGE CHARGES	1,387.65
INTERSTATE	1,196.26
INTRASTATE	191.39
TOTAL CURRENT CHARGES	1,387.65

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE On Or Before 12/21/01	1,954.44
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REMIT TO:

Panhandle Telecommunication Systems, In US Sprint - Access Verification
 P.O Box 511 6500 Sprint Parkway
 Guymon OK 73942-0000 Overland Park KS 66251-0000

BILLING ACCOUNT 6944D0333
 INVOICE NO D0333011213
 BAR
 BACR
 BILL DATE Dec 20, 2001
 DUE DATE Jan 20, 2002
 PAGE 1

BILLING INQUIRIES CALL: Kelley Wells (580) 338-2556

Meet Point Billing

SWITCHED ACCESS SERVICE
 FEATURE GROUP D

*** BALANCE DUE INFORMATION ***

TOTAL AMOUNT OF LAST BILL	1,954.44
PAYMENTS APPLIED	0.00
TOTAL BALANCE DUE	1,954.44

*** DETAIL OF CURRENT CHARGES ***

LATE PAYMENT CHARGES	0.00
USAGE CHARGES	747.56
INTERSTATE	622.20
INTRASTATE	125.36
TOTAL CURRENT CHARGES	747.56
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE On Or Before 01/20/02	2,702.00

REMIT TO:

Panhandle Telecommunication Systems, In US Sprint - Access Verification
P.O. Box 511 6500 Sprint Parkway
Guymon OK 73942-0000 Overland Park KS 66251-0000

BILLING ACCOUNT 6944D0333
INVOICE NO D0333020121
BAR
BACR
BILL DATE Jan 20, 2002
DUE DATE Feb 20, 2002
PAGE 1

BILLING INQUIRIES CALL: Kelley Wells (580) 338-2556

Meet Point Billing

SWITCHED ACCESS SERVICE
FEATURE GROUP D

*** BALANCE DUE INFORMATION ***

TOTAL AMOUNT OF LAST BILL	2,702.00
PAYMENTS APPLIED	0.00
TOTAL BALANCE DUE	2,702.00

*** DETAIL OF CURRENT CHARGES ***

LATE PAYMENT CHARGES	0.00
USAGE CHARGES	445.89
INTERSTATE	342.09
INTRASTATE	103.80
TOTAL CURRENT CHARGES	445.89
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE On Or Before 02/20/02	3,147.89

REMIT TO:

Panhandle Telecommunication Systems, In US Sprint - Access Verification
P.O. Box 511 6500 Sprint Parkway
Guymon OK 73942-0000 Overland Park KS 66251-0000

BILLING ACCOUNT 6944D0333
INVOICE NO D0333020213
BAR
BACR
BILL DATE Feb 20, 2002
DUE DATE Mar 23, 2002
PAGE 1

BILLING INQUIRIES CALL: Kelley Wells (580) 338-2556

Meet Point Billing

SWITCHED ACCESS SERVICE
FEATURE GROUP D

*** BALANCE DUE INFORMATION ***

TOTAL AMOUNT OF LAST BILL	3,147.89
PAYMENTS APPLIED	1,193.45 CR
TOTAL BALANCE DUE	1,954.44

*** DETAIL OF CURRENT CHARGES ***

LATE PAYMENT CHARGES	0.00
USAGE CHARGES	761.58
INTERSTATE	664.26
INTRASTATE	97.32
TOTAL CURRENT CHARGES	761.58
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE On Or Before 03/23/02	2,716.02