



# HASTINGSCHAMBER.COM

Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce

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March 9, 2005

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On behalf of the Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce in Hastings, Nebraska, I write in support of the ALLTEL-Western Wireless merger. We believe this merger will be particularly good for rural customers.

We anticipate a number of benefits from the combining of these two companies. Some of those benefits include:

- The combined company will have the resources to speed deployment of advanced wireless service to rural areas. It will have a greater ability to procure at reasonable prices equipment and customer handsets necessary for high-speed wireless services, ensuring that rural businesses and consumers have access to the same cutting-edge services available to their urban and suburban counterparts.
- We understand that the transaction will expand the combined company's footprint to 33 states, eliminating roaming costs for the combined company's customers in many rural areas and increasing the number of "in-network" mobile phone users that customers can call for free.
- The deal will result in a combined company that will have a more significant regional presence. It will create a stronger competitor against the larger, nationwide wireless carriers and will provide expanded services in rural markets.

Wireless service is as vital for rural Americans as for those in urban areas. The merger of ALLTEL and Western Wireless is a big step forward in bringing expanded and better service to this sector of the population. We encourage you to approve it as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

Tom Hastings, President  
Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce