



*The OASIS Institute
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*Enriching the Lives of Mature Adults
Saint Louis, Missouri 63105
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April 19, 2005

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
9300 East Hampton Drive
Capitol Heights, MD 20743

RE: Support of the SBC Communications and AT&T Merger by OASIS

Dear Secretary Dortch:

OASIS, a national non-profit education organization with programs in 25 cities, supports the merger of SBC Communications and AT&T. OASIS strengthens communities through lifelong learning and service opportunities that inspire diverse audiences of older adults to pursue vibrant, healthy, productive and meaningful lives. SBC Communications has supported the mission of OASIS, and the merger presents even greater potential benefits for the growing older population.

By the year 2030, 71.5 million people will be 65 or older, making up 20% of the population. This growth will challenge our society to support older adults in sustaining active, healthy, independent lives.

Technology has become a critical means for people to stay connected and access needed information. Isolation and loneliness are major factors affecting the aging population and can lead to serious health problems. As seniors have gained access and the skills to use email and the Internet, they are more easily able to stay connected with children, grandchildren and friends. They can find information to help them understand and make decisions about health and finances, two of the greatest concerns to people as they age. Every step taken to reach these people through affordable technology helps them feel more connected to others.

SBC has made major contributions to provide older adults with affordable access and training to use technology to enhance their lives. Through the SBC and AT&T merger, with enhanced capacity for research and development of new technologies, the combined company should be better positioned to serve this growing market.

Technology will also play a key role in the maintaining productivity in the workforce. As life expectancy increases, many people are working longer or reentering the workforce after retirement. By 2015, 20% of the U.S. work force will be over age 55, up from 13% in 2000, according to estimates by the National Council on the Aging. Age-related changes in vision, hearing and dexterity can affect their capacity to use technology. The development of more

accessible technology and assistive devices will contribute to productivity gains in the workforce, and a greater ability to retain experienced workers. A combined company with the strengths of SBC and AT&T will be better positioned to bring advances in technology to the market, contributing to a more active and productive mature workforce.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marcia Kerz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marcia Kerz
President