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November 16, 2016

VIA E-TARIFF SYSTEM

Jocelyn Boyd, Chief Clerk and Administrator
South Carolina Public Service Commission
Synergy Business Park 101 Executive Center Drive
Columbia, SC 29210

Re: *Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Inc.'s Revisions to its General Customer Services Tariff*

Dear Ms. Boyd:

Enclosed for filing please find revisions to Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Inc.'s General Customer Services Tariff. The tariff pages enclosed for review and approval are as follows:

Section III - 3 rd Revised Page 14 2 nd Revised Page 15 2 nd Revised Page 18
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This tariff revision reflects changes to Sandhill's tariff to reflect recent federal changes to the Lifeline program, which will become effective December 2, 2016. The Commission recently granted the Petition of BellSouth Telecommunications, LLC d/b/a AT&T South Carolina for an Order Adopting Recent Changes to the Federal Lifeline Program for the State of South Carolina. See Commission Directive dated November 9, 2016 in Docket No. 2016-367-C.

The enclosed tariff has an effective date of December 2, 2016, to coincide with the effective date of the federal changes.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Lans Chase
Staff Director – Regulatory Affairs

cc: Susan Melton – Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
Christopher Rozycki – Office of Regulatory Staff
James M. McDaniel – Office of Regulatory Staff

BASIC LOCAL EXCHANGE SERVICE

3.7 LIFELINE PROGRAM

3.7.1 General

- A. Lifeline Assistance is a non-transferable residential retail service offering for which qualifying low-income subscribers pay reduced charges, as provided for below. Lifeline Assistance enables eligible subscribers to pay reduced charges on supported services as defined in 47 C.F.R. Section 54.101 which meet the minimum standards as defined in 47 C.F.R. Section 54.408. (C)
- B. The Lifeline credit available to an eligible customer in South Carolina is equal to the total of federal support as established by the Federal Communications Commission (47 C.F.R. Section 54.403) and state support as established by the Public Service Commission of South Carolina. The amount of credit will not exceed the charge for local service, which includes the access line, the Subscriber Line Charge and local usage. (C)
- C. The Company shall apply the baseline payments received by the administrator of the federal Lifeline Assistance program to waive the qualifying customer's federal End-User Common Line Charge associated with the voice service. The Company shall apply any additional federal support amount to the qualifying customer's basic local exchange service rate. (D)
- D. Qualifying customers must subscribe to a generally available residential service plan or package that is made generally available in the Company's service area. (C)
- E. Partial payments that are received from Lifeline customers shall first be applied to the supported service charges and then to any outstanding charges for additional services. (C)
- F. Nothing in this Section shall prohibit a customer who is otherwise eligible for the Lifeline Program from obtaining and using telecommunications equipment and services designed to aid such customer in utilizing qualifying telecommunications services.
- G. The Lifeline Program rate reduction does not apply to Service Connection Charges.
- H. The Lifeline Program rate will not be available on a retroactive basis.

BASIC LOCAL EXCHANGE SERVICE

3.7 LIFELINE PROGRAM (Cont'd)

3.7.2 Eligibility and Certification Requirements

A. Subscribers are eligible for Lifeline Assistance if:

1. The subscriber's household income is at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, or
2. The subscriber, or one or more of the subscriber's dependents or the subscriber's household, receives benefits from at least one of the following qualifying programs:

Medicaid;

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps;

Supplemental Security Income (SSI);

Federal Public Housing Assistance;

(D)

(D)

(D)

Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit Programs.

(N)

3. Other eligibility requirements may be established by the Federal Communications Commission.

(C)

(C)

B. Until the National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier has been implemented in South Carolina, each subscriber to Lifeline Assistance must provide documentation of income-based or program-based eligibility and certify in writing to the Company, under penalty of perjury, that s/he receives benefits under a program outlined in paragraph A. above, and must on that same document, agree to notify the Company if s/he ceases to participate in the program(s) or to meet income eligibility requirements. The certification form shall conform to the requirements described herein, and shall be made available upon request to any subscriber. The Company shall retain all such subscriber certifications in order to furnish proof of subscriber eligibility as may be required from time to time by Universal Service administrators.

(N)

(C)

C. A subscriber may elect at the time of subscription to Lifeline Assistance to receive toll limitation as part of Lifeline Assistance. "Toll limitation" is a service that allows a subscriber to elect not to allow the completion of outgoing toll calls from the subscriber's residence.

BASIC LOCAL EXCHANGE SERVICE

3.7 LIFELINE PROGRAM (Cont'd)

3.7.3 Restrictions

- A. Only one Lifeline Assistance credit is available per household.

3.7.4 Recertification

- A. Customers must recertify on an annual basis that they continue to qualify for the discounted service.

3.7.5 Credit and Collection

- A. Credit References

The credit verification procedures used for all applicants who apply for service with the Cooperative will also be used for applicants who apply for service under the Lifeline Program.

- B. Deposits

The Company may not collect a service deposit in order to initiate voice-only Lifeline Assistance if the qualifying low-income subscriber voluntarily elects toll blocking from the Company, where available or if the qualifying low-income subscriber elects a calling plan that does not distinguish between toll and non-toll calls in its pricing. If toll blocking is unavailable, then the Company may charge a service deposit. (C)