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August 1, 2006

RECEIVED

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SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION

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VIA FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION (605) 773-6818
AND US MAIL

Ms. Julie Johnson, Hearing Examiner
Bureau of Administration
Office of Hearing Examiners
210 East 4th Street
Pierre, SD 57501

RE: OHE File PUC 6-06

In the Matter of the Petitions of Armour Independent Telephone Company, Bridgewater-Canistota Independent Telephone Company, Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc., Kadoka Telephone Company, Sioux Valley Telephone Company, Union Telephone Company and Vivian Telephone Company for Arbitration Pursuant to the Telecommunications Act of 1996 to Resolve Issues relating to Interconnection with WWC License, L.L.C. (PUC Dockets TC06-036, TC06-037, TC06-038, TC06-039, TC06-040, TC06-041, TC06-042)

Dear Ms. Johnson:

Thank you for your correspondence dated July 24 and 25, 2006. We have not previously responded to your communications regarding the scheduling of a prehearing conference in the above matter because we knew we would be filing, on behalf of the Golden West Companies, an Application for Reconsideration of the decision of the Public Utilities Commission to reconsider its previous decision to transfer the above-reference documents to the Office of Hearing Examiners. Under these circumstances, we would respectfully suggest that the scheduling of the prehearing conference call be delayed until after such time as the Commission has had an opportunity to hear oral argument and make a ruling on the Application for Reconsideration.

Additionally, the Golden West Companies are exercising their rights under SDCL § 1-26D-10, pursuant to that statute's directive, and have enclosed herewith the requisite Affidavit.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Best regards.

Ms. Julie Johnson

August 1, 2006

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Sincerely,

CUTLER & DONAHOE, LLP



Meredith A. Moore

For the Firm

MAM/jlh

Enclosures

cc: Mr. Talbot Wiczorek (via U.S. Mail only)
Mr. Stephen Rowell (via U.S. Mail only)
Mr. Rich Coit (via U.S. Mail only)
Ms. Rolayne Wiest (via U.S. Mail only)
Ms. Sara Greff (via U.S. Mail only)
Mr. Leo Disburg (via U.S. Mail only)

4. On July 28, 2006, I received another letter, also on the letterhead of the OHE, signed by Leo Disburg and stating: "The above-referenced matter has been assigned to Julie M. Johnson, Hearing Examiner. In the event Ms. Johnson is unavailable on the scheduled hearing date, Hillary Brady may be appointed in her place."

5. SDCL § 1-26D-10 grants the absolute right to any part to a matter for which a hearing examiner from the OHE has been appointed to file an affidavit "requesting the appointment of another hearing examiner." The communication referenced in the preceding paragraph states that Ms. Johnson's appointment is conditioned upon her "availability" on the scheduled hearing date. Thus, it appears that the OHE has made an appointment of a primary and a secondary hearing examiner or a conditional appointment. No such procedure is provided in SDCL Chapter 1-26D.

6. Pursuant to SDCL §1-26D-10, the Golden West Companies request that the Bureau of Administration, Office of Hearing Examiners appoint another hearing examiner in place of Ms. Johnson in each of the above-referenced dockets, and to the extent that Mr. Disburg's letter constitutes Ms. Brady as a secondary or substitute hearing examiner if and when Ms. Johnson is "unavailable", the Golden West Companies further request appointment of another hearing examiner in place of Ms. Brady as Ms. Johnson's substitute hearing examiner.

7. The Golden West Companies tender this Affidavit requesting appointment of another hearing examiner without prejudice to and under complete reservation of rights, confirm to the OHE that on July 28, 2006 the Golden West Companies filed a Motion for Reconsideration and supporting Memorandum with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission setting forth reasons that these matters should not be transferred to the OHE pursuant to SDCL § 1-26-18.3, and otherwise reserve all rights to otherwise object to or appeal

from the Order Granting Request to Use the Office of Hearing Examiners made and entered by the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission on June 14, 2006.

Dated this 1st day of August, 2006.

Meredith A. Moore
Meredith A. Moore
Attorney for Armour Independent Telephone Company, Bridgewater-Canistota Telephone Company, Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc., Kadoka Telephone Company, Sioux Valley Telephone Company, Union Telephone Company, and Vivian Telephone Company (collectively the "Golden West Companies")

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 1st day of August, 2006.

[Signature]
Notary Public – South Dakota
My commission expires: 12/20/07

[SEAL]

JODY L. HARRELL
NOTARY PUBLIC, SOUTH DAKOTA
My Commission Expires
December 20, 2007

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Their Attorneys

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

On this 28th day of July, 2006, a true and correct copy of the foregoing was served upon Talbot Wieczorek, of Gunderson, Palmer, Goodsell & Nelson, LLP, 440 Rushmore Road, Rapid City, SD 57701, Stephen B. Rowell, Mailstop 1269 B5-F11-C, One Allied Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202, legal counsel for WWC License L.L.C., Leo Disburg, Chief Hearing Examiner, Office of Hearing Examiners, 210 East 4th Avenue, Pierre, SD 57501, Rolayne Wiest of the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission at 500 East Capitol Avenue, 1st Floor, Pierre, South Dakota 57501, Sara Greff of the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission at 500 East Capitol Avenue, 1st Floor, Pierre, South Dakota 57501, and to Rich Coit, South Dakota Telecommunications Association, 320 East Capitol Avenue, Pierre, South Dakota 57501, by regular United States mail, first class postage prepaid.



One of the Attorneys for Petitioners