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**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC  
UTILITIES COMMISSION**

October 31, 2016

Patricia Van Gerpen, Executive Director  
South Dakota Public Utilities Commission  
Capitol Building  
500 E. Capitol Ave.  
Pierre, SD 57501

**Re: Notice of West River Cooperative Telephone Company's Application before the  
FCC for Authority to Discontinue Certain Services**

Dear Ms. Van Gerpen,

On behalf of West River Cooperative Telephone Company (West River) please find enclosed a copy of West River's application before the Federal Communications Commission for Authority to Discontinue Certain Services in accordance with 47 C.F.R § 63.71.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lori Sherwood  
Vantage Point Solutions

on behalf of

Colle Nash  
General Manager  
West River Cooperative Telephone Company

Enclosures

cc: Colle Nash

**VANTAGEPNT.COM 605-995-1777**  
2211 N Minnesota Street Mitchell SD 57301

**Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of )  
 )  
Section 63.71 Application of )  
 )  
West River Cooperative Telephone Company )  
 )  
For Authority Pursuant to Section 214 of )  
The Communications Act of 1934, As Amended, )  
To Discontinue Certain Services )

File No. \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION 63.71 APPLICATION OF WEST RIVER COOPERATIVE TELEPHONE COMPANY**

Pursuant to Section 214(a) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended,<sup>1</sup> and Section 63.71 of the Federal Communications Commission's rules,<sup>2</sup> West River Cooperative Telephone Company (the "Company") hereby files this application requesting authority to discontinue certain Operator Services, including Busy Line Verification (BLV) and Busy Line Interruption (BLI) services, to customers the Company serves in the State of South Dakota ("Application").<sup>3</sup>

In support of this Application, West River Cooperative Telephone Company submits the following information:

**I. Information Required by Section 63.71(a)(1) – (4)**

**A. Name and Address of Carrier**

West River Cooperative Telephone Company

For purposes of this Application, the Commission may contact:

Colle Nash  
CEO/General Manager  
West River Cooperative Telephone Company  
801 Coleman Ave  
PO Box 39

<sup>1</sup> See 47 C.S.C. § 214(a).

<sup>2</sup> See 47 C.F.R. § 63.71.

<sup>3</sup> As required by Section 63.71(a) of the Commission's Rules, West River Cooperative Telephone Company has notified and submitted a copy of this Application concurrent with this filing to the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, the Governor of South Dakota, and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Defense.

Bison, SD 57620  
605-244-5213  
westriver@sdplains.com

**B. Date of Planned Service Discontinuance**

West River Cooperative Telephone Company plans to discontinue BLV and BLI services (collectively, "Affected Services") to its customers in the State of South Dakota on or after January 1, 2017 subject to the necessary federal and state regulatory approvals.

**C. Points of Geographic Areas of Service Affected**

West River Cooperative Telephone Company will discontinue the Affected Services to local exchange customers in the Company's service area of Northwest South Dakota which includes the towns of Lemmon, Bison, Buffalo, Newell, Meadow, Sorum, Camp Crook, Nisland, Prairie City, and Reva.

**D. Brief Description of the Types of Services Affected**

In the areas referenced above, West River Cooperative Telephone Company is discontinuing the following Operator Services:

1. **Busy Line Verification (BLV)** - allows an operator to establish a "talking" connection to an apparently busy station line to determine if the station line is in working order.
2. **Busy Line Interruption (BLI)** - allows an operator to interrupt a voice conversation in progress on a line to advise the interrupted subscriber that the interrupting party has a need to reach the subscriber.

This discontinuance is limited to the Affected Services. Customers will continue having access to all other existing services without interruption.

**II. Brief Description of the Dates and Methods of Notice to All Affected Customers**

West River Cooperative Telephone Company sent customer notification letters to its local exchange customers as a bill insert on October 31, 2016. Please reference Exhibit A, which provides a sample copy of the notification letter. West River Cooperative Telephone Company decided a bill insert would serve as the most effective and economic method of reaching its customers. In addition, West River Cooperative also provided notification on its website/newsletter at <http://www.sdplains.com>.

Additionally, copies of this Application have been sent to the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, the South Dakota Governor, and the Special Assistant for

Telecommunications to the Secretary of Defense, as required by 63.71(a) of the Commission's rules.

**III. Status of Carrier**

West River Cooperative Telephone Company is a non-dominant carrier.

**IV. Circumstances of Discontinuance**

The Company's discontinuance of the Affected Services was prompted by its scheduled migration from the Time Division Multiplexing (TDM) platform to a new softswitch platform, which utilizes session initiated protocol (SIP). The low market demand also prompted the decision to discontinue the Affected Services. From January 1, 2015 through May 24, 2016, the Company only had 1 instance of customers utilizing BLV service, and had zero instances of customers utilizing BLI service. The growth of other communications methods, including text messaging, mobile phones, email and other social media applications, has reduced customer demand for the Affected Services. The discontinuance of the BLV and BLI Operator Services will not adversely affect the Company's customers, as the vast majority of the market has already replaced the Affected Services with other communications methods.

**V. Certification**

On behalf of West River Cooperative Telephone Company, I, Colle Nash, the undersigned CEO/General Manager, hereby certify that the statements contained herein are true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and made in good faith.

**VI. Conclusion**

For the reasons stated herein, the Company respectfully requests the Commission grants this Application.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Colle Nash*

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Colle Nash  
CEO/General Manager  
West River Cooperative Telephone  
Company  
801 Coleman Ave  
PO Box 39  
Bison, SD 57620  
605-244-5213  
westriver@sdplains.com

Date

10-31-2016

## **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that West River Cooperative Telephone Company's Section 63.71 Application to discontinue the Operator Services discussed herein was served on October 31, 2016, by mailing copies by first class U.S. Mail, to the following persons at the addresses listed below.

Patricia Van Gerpen, Executive Director  
South Dakota Public Utilities Commission  
Capitol Building  
500 E. Capitol Ave.  
Pierre, SD 57501

Office of Governor Dennis Daugaard  
State of South Dakota  
Capitol Building  
500 E Capitol Ave.  
Pierre, SD 57501

Secretary of Defense  
Attn: Special Assistant for Telecommunications  
The Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

**EXHIBIT A**

**CUSTOMER NOTIFICATION**



# West River Cooperative Telephone Company

801 Coleman Ave • PO Box 39 • Bison, SD 57620

Phone: 605-244-5213 • Fax: 605-244-7288

Email: [westriver@sdplains.com](mailto:westriver@sdplains.com)

October 31, 2016

Re: Notice of Discontinuance of Certain Operator Services

Dear Valued Customer:

This letter is to inform you that West River Cooperative Telephone Company will no longer be providing certain legacy operator services on or after January 1, 2017 pending federal and state regulatory approval. Specifically, the following operator services will be discontinued.

- **Busy Line Verification (BLV)** – An operator service allowing an operator to establish a connection to confirm when a line is idle or in use.
- **Busy Line Interruption (BLI)** – An operator service allowing an operator to interrupt a voice conversation in progress on a line and advise the interrupted subscriber that an interrupting party needs to reach the subscriber.

This discontinuance is limited to the operator services listed above and will not affect your communications service in any other way. Customers will continue having access to general operator services, including the following: directory assistance, directory assistance with call completion, operator assisted dialing, operator person-to-person calls, operator third number billing calls, and operator station paid domestic and international calls.

In 2016, West River Cooperative Telephone Company had zero instances of customers utilizing BLV service, and had zero instances of customers utilizing BLI service. Customer demand for BLV and BLI operator services has declined as mobile phones, text messaging, email and other social media applications have increased in popularity.

The FCC will normally authorize this proposed discontinuance of service (or reduction or impairment) unless it is shown that customers would be unable to receive service or a reasonable substitute from another carrier or that the public convenience and necessity is otherwise adversely affected. If you wish to object, you should file your comments as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days after the Commission releases public notice of the proposed discontinuance. Address them to the Federal Communications Commission, Wireline Competition Bureau, Competition Policy Division, Washington, DC 20554, and include in your comments a reference to the § 63.71 Application of (carrier's name). Comments should include specific information about the impact of this proposed discontinuance (or reduction or impairment) upon you or your company, including any inability to acquire reasonable substitute service.

If you have any questions about this notice, please contact us at 605-244-5213. We thank you for your business and look forward to continuing to serve your communications needs.

Sincerely,  
Colle Nash  
West River Cooperative Telephone Company