10. NETWORK INTERCONNECTION SERVICES

10.1 GENERAL

The Network Interconnection Services (NIS) available under this tariff consists of Physical Network Interconnection Arrangements.

NIS is available only in connection with the termination of Local Traffic to End Users to whom the Company is able to terminate Calls using Access Services as provided elsewhere in this tariff. NIS is only available to Customers who are Facility-Based Certified Local Exchange Carriers (CLEC), authorized by THE MIDWEST, INC. STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA Public Service Commission to provide Local Exchange Service in THE MIDWEST, INC. STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA. The Company shall not be obligated to provide NIS to Customers that do not offer services comparable to NIS to the Company for the termination of Local Traffic originated by the Company. A CLEC providing Local Exchange Service using one or more unbundled network elements provided by another Carrier shall be deemed to be facility-based.

NIS availability is as set forth in Section 16.

10.1.1 Regulations

The provisions of Section 2 and Section 5 of this tariff shall apply to NIS unless otherwise specifically provided herein.

A. Service Rearrangements

Service rearrangements are as described in Section 2.4.1.C.2. All NIS rearrangements, except the "records only" changes set forth in Section 5.4.1.A., and the administrative changes set forth in Section 5.4.2, will be treated as disconnects and starts.

10. NETWORK INTERCONNECTION SERVICES

10.2 PHYSICAL NETWORK INTERCONNECTION ARRANGEMENTS

Physical Network Interconnection Arrangements provide the necessary facilities, equipment and connections to allow a Customer to terminate Local Traffic on the Company's network. Physical Network Interconnection Arrangements are not available in connection with termination of Local Traffic to NEPS End Offices.

10.2.1 Obligations of the Company and the Customer

The Company and the Customer are each individually responsible for the installation, operation, and maintenance of the equipment and facilities on their own respective networks. The Company and the Customer will perform functions for each other which are reasonably necessary to engineer, install, maintain, and administer the facilities subject to this arrangement.

Except as may otherwise be agreed by the Company and the Customer, each party is responsible for the provisioning of the facilities within its own network up to the Point of Interconnection (POI) as set forth in 10.2.2 following.

The Customer and the Company shall exchange technical descriptions and forecasts of their interconnection and traffic requirements in sufficient detail to assure traffic completion to and from all customers within the exchange.

The Customer and the Company will cooperate to determine the performance of their respective networks and will implement joint management controls to further overall service integrity.

10.2.2 Establishing Points of Interconnection

The Company shall designate Points of Interconnection ("POI") at the Company's End Office, and at any other reasonable point on the Company's network. The Company and the Customer may establish a POI at other points by mutual agreement.

10. NETWORK INTERCONNECTION SERVICES

10.2 PHYSICAL NETWORK INTERCONNECTION ARRANGEMENTS (continued)

10.2.2 Establishing Points of Interconnection (continued)

The Customer is responsible for providing its own DS1 or DS3 facilities to route calls to the POI. Each party shall bear its own costs related to the provisioning and installation of its facilities. After installation of any facility, only Company personnel will be permitted access to the Company side of the POI for maintenance or any other purpose.

Subject to mutual agreement between the Customer and the Company, a Customer may terminate traffic on the Company's network in one of two ways: 1) separate trunk groups for Local Traffic and non-Local Traffic; or 2) on combined trunk groups.

The Customer will compensate the Company for terminating Local Traffic which the Customer delivers at the POI for termination on the Company's network in accordance with the Interconnection Agreement between the Company and the Customer.

A. DS1 Port Terminations

The Company provides for the connection of a Customer's DS1 or DS3 facility at the POI, pursuant to charges set forth in the Price Schedule.

1) DS1 Facility

Provided that facilities are available, at the Customer's option, dedicated DS1 facilities may be provided by the Company for termination at the Company's POI. These facilities transmit electrical signals at 1.544 Mbps with the capability to channelize up to 24 voice frequency transmission paths.

2) DS3 Facility

Upon request, the Company will provide for an arrangement that converts a DS3 channel operating at a terminating speed of 44.736 to 28 DS1 channels operating at a terminating speed of 1.544 Mbps using digital time compression multiplexing pursuant to charges set forth in the Price Schedule. When the Customer elects to connect its DS3 facility via Company provided multiplexing, in addition to the multiplexing charges the Customer will also pay the charges for 28 DS1 Port Terminations.

10. NETWORK INTERCONNECTION SERVICES

10.2 PHYSICAL NETWORK INTERCONNECTION ARRANGEMENTS (continued)

10.2.2 Establishing Points of Interconnection (continued)

A. DS1 Port Terminations (continued)

3) 64 Clear Channel Capability

The Company, where available and at the Customer's request, will arrange the channels derived from a DS1 facility for 64 Clear Channel Capability pursuant to charges set forth in the Price Schedule. This optional feature employs the Bipolar 8 Zero Suppression (B8ZS) technique to permit Customers to use the full 64 Kbps bandwidth of a derived channel.

10.2.3 SS7 Interconnection

When the Customer uses SS7 signaling to set up calls pursuant to this tariff, the Customer shall provide if available, Calling Party Number (CPN) within the SS7 signaling message. If it is technically infeasible for the Customer to use SS7, the Customer shall use multi-frequency (MF) signaling. The Customer may elect to arrange for signaling connectivity through a third party provider which is connected to the Company's SS7 network.

Access to SS7 provides service offerings to requesting facilities-based carriers/providers seeking access to the Company's Common Channel Signaling (CCS) network including access to signaling ports and links providing a number of access arrangements for use by facilities-based carriers/providers using their own switching facilities.

The AT&T CCS network is a digital data network that carries signaling information and interfaces with the voice/data network. The network uses the SS7 protocol, a protocol developed by the Consultative Committee for International Telephone and Telegraph (CCITT) and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) for signaling functions such as routing, establishing connections and other services. Agreements may be required for passing optional pieces of the SS7 protocol.

10. NETWORK INTERCONNECTION SERVICES

10.2 PHYSICAL NETWORK INTERCONNECTION ARRANGEMENTS (continued)

10.2.3 SS7 Interconnection (continued)

The AT&T Signaling Access Service provides access to the AT&T CCS network. Access to the network is provided by subscribing to a STP Link Termination, STP Link Transport and a dedicated Signal Transfer Point (STP) port for facilities-based carriers/providers with their won STPs and/or Signal Switching Points (SSPS).

A Customer has the option of connecting to the Company's SS7 network either:

- On a shared use link and port.. If a Customer chooses to connect to the Company's SS7 network using shared link(s) and port(s), the Company shall provide such link(s) and port(s) and the Customer will pay the full charges unless the Company agrees to prorating the charges based upon Percent Signaling Usage (PSU).

- The Customer and the Company agree on another signaling interconnection arrangement on an individual case basis.

A. Application of Charges

The rates that apply for AT&T Signaling Access Service depend upon whether the facilities-based carrier interconnects with the signaling network at the Company's STP from its own SP/SSPs.

1) For the facilities-based carrier, there are recurring, usage and nonrecurring charges that apply. Recurring and nonrecurring charges apply for each Link Termination and Port that is established on a STP. Usage charges apply for the formulation, transport and switching of ISDN User Part (ISUP) or Transaction Capabilities Application Part (TCAP) messages throughout the network.

2) Nonrecurring charges apply to the facilities-based carrier for the establishment or disconnection of Originating Point Codes (OPC). An OPC installation charge applies for each OPC established, as well as each OPC added or changed subsequent to the establishment of STP Access. An OPC disconnection charge applies for each OPC removed. The OPC charge applies on a per service basis.

10. NETWORK INTERCONNECTION SERVICES

10.2 PHYSICAL NETWORK INTERCONNECTION ARRANGEMENTS (continued)

10.2.3 SS7 Interconnection (continued)

B. Signal Formulation

An ISUP Signal formulation usage charge will be assessed to the facilities-base Carrier/provide for each Initial Address Message (IAM) that is formulated at the Company's End or Tandem Office for the termination of traffic into the Company's network or when the Company's End Office or Tandem is used for the termination of traffic into the facilities-based carrier's network or another facilities-based carrier's network. A TCAP Signal Formulation usage charge will be assessed to the facilities-based carrier for each TCAP message that is formulated to the Company's end office for the termination of signaling associated messages.

An ISUP Signal Formulation usage charge will be assessed to the facilities-based carrier/provider for each IAM message that is formulated at the Company's switch/tandem for the origination or termination of service to or from a carrier's switch.

C. Signal Transport

An ISUP Signal Transport usage charge will be assessed to the facilities-based carrier/provided for each IAM, message that is transported to the Company's end office for the termination or origination of direct or tandem routed traffic. A TCAP Signal Transport usage charge will be assessed to the facilities-based carrier for each TCAP message that is transported to the Company's end office for the termination of signaling associated messages.

10. NETWORK INTERCONNECTION SERVICES

10.2 PHYSICAL NETWORK INTERCONNECTION ARRANGEMENTS (continued)

10.2.3 SS7 Interconnection (continued)

D. Signal Switching

An ISUP Signal Switching usage charge will be assessed to the facilities-base carrier/provider for each IAM that is switched at the STP for termination of direct or tandem routed traffic to the Company's end office or for the origination of direct or tandem routed traffic within the facilities-base carrier's network or to another carrier's network. An ISUP Signal Switching usage charge will be assessed for each IAM that is switched at the local STP for the origination of traffic. An ISUP Signal Switching usage charge will be assessed to the facilities-based carrier/provider for each IAM that is switched at the STP for the termination of traffic. A TCAP Signal Switching usage charge will be assessed for each TCAP message that is switched by the STP for the origination of signaling associated messages.

The application of these rates is set forth in the Price Schedule.

10.2.4 Charges

The charges applicable to Physical Network Interconnection Arrangements are set forth in the Price Schedule.

10.2.5 Collocation

Nothing in this tariff shall obligate the Company to provide physical collocation services to the Customer. Collocation arrangements, if any, will be made subject to availability and on an Individual Case Basis.