

**Docket Number:** TC16-039  
**Subject Matter:** First Data Request  
**Request to:** CenturyLink  
**Request from:** South Dakota Public Utilities Commission Staff  
**Date of Request:** August 10, 2016  
**Responses Due:** August 24, 2016

- 1-1) Refer to Attachment E.  
a. Provide a brief description of the outage and the cause(s) of the outage.

**Response:** A multiplexer in the Sioux Falls central office lost its database when a CPU card failed.

- b. What steps have been taken to prevent a similar situation in the future?

**Response:** Since the failure was caused by a card malfunction it is difficult to predict when these will occur. Therefore the response to the malfunction is limited to replacement in this case. The database was reloaded and service restore.

- c. Were customers in the Flandreau wire center without emergency services for the duration of the outage?

**Response:** The Flandreau wire center 911 service was rerouted at 10:00 am central time.

- 1-2) Refer to Attachment C.  
a. Provide the same table for year 2017 projections.

**Response:** See confidential Supplemental Attachment A.

- b. In Docket TC15-049, CenturyLink projected approximately \$2.6 million in capital expenditures in 2015, with approximately \$2.4 million in outside plant. Actual spending came in at approximately \$2.1 million with \$1.6 million attributable to outside plant. Provide explanations for the targets not being met in the following wire centers: Arlington, Belle Fourche, Blackhawk, Deadwood, Elk Point, Flandreau, Fort Pierre, Lead, Lake Preston, McIntosh, Madison, Redfield, Spearfish, Tea, and Whitewood.

**Response:** The capital budget provided in Docket TC15-049 was based on best estimates at the time of filing. As noted in the filing, project estimates are of a tentative nature and should not be interpreted to be approved, engineered, and ordered for installation. Plans/project estimates are 'snapshots in time' and may change due to variations in growth trends (+/-), competitive considerations, weather impacts, natural disasters, regulatory requirements, or variations and upgrades in vendor equipment. For any of South Dakota's wire centers during the planning period, resources may be shifted, increased, deferred or taken off the drawing board' altogether. Continual planning and engineering evaluation during the six to nine month planning cycle are required to meet service quality needs throughout South Dakota wire centers.

- c. Explain why these missed targets are not going to be caught up in 2016 in the following wire centers: Blackhawk, Elk Point, Flandreau, Fort Pierre, Lead, Lake Preston, McIntosh, Tea, and Whitewood.

**Response:** As noted in response 1-2 capital forecasts are tentative in nature and are subject to change due to variations in growth trends (+/-), competitive considerations, weather impacts, natural disasters, regulatory requirements, or variations and upgrades in vendor equipment.

- d. Page 2 states that CenturyLink's construction spending in high cost wire centers through May 2016 is approximately \$630K. What is this figure through July? Is the \$15.8 million projection for 2016 still within reach?

**Response:** Through July 2016 approximately \$1.8M has been spent on capital projects. Despite the slow start to the year, the South Dakota teams are committed to spend the allocated capital budget dollars for the high-cost exchanges in 2016.

- e. Were there any other factors besides CenturyLink's funding switching from frozen high cost support to CAF II funding toward the end of summer which attributed to the approximate \$2.1 million 2015 capital spending falling significantly short of the approximate \$9.1 million in total universal service funding? Explain.

**Response:** The capital planning for 2015 had occurred before the conversion to CAF Phase II. CAF Phase II acceptance did not occur until August with the change in funding starting in September. As a result little time remained in 2015 to modify and execute on existing capital plans. It should be noted that the company spent approximately \$74 million in South Dakota for provision, maintenance, and upgrade of facilities to maintain and enable broadband capable networks.

- 1-3) Refer to Attachment B.

- a. The last sentence states the company received approximately \$8M in CAF II funding in 2016 and anticipates receiving approximately the same amount in 2017 and 2018. Were these years supposed to read 2015, 2016, and 2017?

**Response:** Attachment B reference should have stated that the company received approximately \$9M in 2015 instead of \$8M in 2016. The company anticipates receiving approximately \$9M annually for the term of the program.

- b. The second to last sentence states the company plans to meet its CAF II broadband obligations by enabling approximately 4,300 and 2,300 locations in 2016 and 2017. How many locations were enabled in 2015? When does CenturyLink plan to ultimately reach its 15,071 location commitment?

**Response:** 432 locations were enabled by the end of 2015 as depicted on the Form 481. The company plans on meeting its CAF II broadband obligations by the end of the CAF II six-year program.

- c. Provide a map or maps which detail the locations enabled thus far and CenturyLink's deployment plan, by year, going forward.

**Response:** See attached confidential Supplemental Attachment B for visual of 2015 actuals and 2016 and 2017 planned locations. See Form 481 for details on actual 2015 enabled locations.

- 1-4) Did all new customers receive information on Lifeline availability within 30 days of receiving service?

**Response:** CenturyLink sends a welcome letter to new customers within 30 days of receiving service. The following language is included in the letter:

"Telephone assistance plans help low-income citizens with the cost of telephone service. Eligibility is dependent upon income guidelines and other criteria. For more information, please call CenturyLink."

See attached Supplemental Attachment C for a sample welcome letter. In addition, CenturyLink placed newspaper advertisements for Tribal Lifeline in May and residential Lifeline in November 2015. CenturyLink also maintains a website ([www.centurylink.com/lifeline](http://www.centurylink.com/lifeline)) with Lifeline applications and additional Lifeline and Link-Up resources and material. CenturyLink also maintains Lifeline information in its telephone directories and provides customers with an annual bill insert containing Lifeline information.

- 1-5) Does CenturyLink still provide Lifeline outreach to the agencies listed on pages 1 and 2 of Attachment H in Docket TC15-049?

**Response:** Agencies are encouraged to access [www.centurylink.com/lifeline](http://www.centurylink.com/lifeline) to obtain the most current versions of the Lifeline application.

- 1-6) Briefly explain CenturyLink's complaint resolution process.

**Response:** Once a complaint is received from a regulatory agency, the complaint is assigned to a Customer Service Manager on the team that supports the specific State's regulatory agency.

The assigned manager will open a file and document all company required information, including a copy of the complaint. The manager investigates issue(s) and works to resolve those issues in manner acceptable to the customer, the company, and in compliance with Tariffs and Commission rules and regulations.

Once the issues are resolved, the outcome is provided to the regulatory agency in a timeframe and manner outlined in Commission rules and/or regulations. Any actions taken and the response to the Commission are added to the file and the file is closed.

- 1-7) Refer to line 8,612 (Block 460990010022010) of the Form 477 Broadband Deployment excel file. What necessitated a 10 mbps / 1 mbps fiber offering in 2015?

**Response:** This location is an apartment complex. The 10 mbps / 1 mbps assigned speed was reported in error. This correct speed is rated at a minimum of 100 mbps / 50 mbps service. Our next FCC Form 477 filing will reflect this updated information.

- 1-8) What is CenturyLink's plan to build out to its areas deemed ineligible for funding due to the average cost being above the extremely high-cost threshold?

**Response:** CenturyLink is evaluating the extremely high-cost areas in terms of potential funding from the CAF Phase II auction. Without successfully winning CAF Phase II auction funds, CenturyLink's broadband build out plans in the extremely high-cost census blocks would be limited due to high costs.