

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF)
EAST PLAINS TELECOM, INC. FOR A)
CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE)
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES IN)
SOUTH DAKOTA)

ORDER GRANTING
CERTIFICATE OF
AUTHORITY

TC97-026

On March 13, 1997, the Public Utilities Commission (Commission), in accordance with SDCL 49-31-3 and ARSD 20:10:24:02, received an application for a certificate of authority from East Plains Telecom, Inc. (East Plains Telecom, Inc.).

East Plains Telecom, Inc. proposes to offer local exchange service and toll access to exchanges specified in the application for a certificate of authority. U S WEST Communications, Inc., sold East Plains Telecom, Inc. the local exchanges specified in the application, and the sale and conditions of the purchase as approved by the Commission are contained in Dockets TC96-010 and TC96-125.

On March 13, 1997, the Commission electronically transmitted notice of the filing and the intervention deadline of March 28, 1997, to interested individuals and entities. No petitions to intervene or comments were filed and at its regularly scheduled April 15, 1997, meeting, the Commission considered East Plains Telecom, Inc.'s request for a certificate of authority. Commission Staff recommended granting a certificate of authority.

The Commission finds that it has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to Chapter 49-31, specifically 49-31-3 and ARSD 20:10:24:02 and 20:10:24:03. The Commission finds that East Plains Telecom, Inc. has met the legal requirements established for the granting of a certificate of authority. East Plains Telecom, Inc. has, in accordance with SDCL 49-31-3, demonstrated sufficient technical, financial and managerial capabilities to offer telecommunications services in South Dakota. The Commission approves East Plains Telecom, Inc.'s application for a certificate of authority to operate in the geographic service area specified in its application for a certificate of authority (Commissioner Schoenfelder dissenting). As the Commission's final decision in this matter, it is therefore

ORDERED, that East Plains Telecom, Inc.'s application for a certificate of authority is hereby granted effective May 13, 1997, upon furnishing proof of the closing of the sale, for the service area specified in its application for a certificate of authority. It is

FURTHER ORDERED, that East Plains Telecom, Inc. shall file informational copies of tariff changes with the Commission as the changes occur.

Dated at Pierre, South Dakota, this 28th day of April, 1997.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE	
The undersigned hereby certifies that this document has been served today upon all parties of record in this docket, as listed on the docket service list, by facsimile or by first class mail, in properly addressed envelopes, with charges prepaid thereon.	
By:	<u>Delaine Kalbo</u>
Date:	<u>4/28/97</u>
(OFFICIAL SEAL)	

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

James A. Burg
JAMES A. BURG, Chairman

Pam Nelson
PAM NELSON, Commissioner

LASKA SCHOENFELDER, Commissioner
dissenting