

## DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS

The Division of Communications assists the Commission in carrying out its duties as prescribed by the Code of Virginia. It oversees the continued implementation of competition in telecommunications markets with the goal of achieving an effective regulatory environment that balances the advancement of competitive markets with the protection of consumers. The Division assists the Commission in developing, implementing, and enforcing alternatives to traditional forms of regulation as competitive markets evolve. It monitors, enforces and makes interpretations on certain rates, tariffs, and operating procedures of investor-owned telecommunications utilities. The Division enforces service standards, assures compliance with tariff regulations, coordinates extended area service studies, enforces pay telephone regulations, assists in carrying out provisions of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, and prescribes depreciation rates. The Staff testifies in rate, service, and generic hearings, and meets with the public on communications issues and problems. The Division maintains territorial maps, performs special studies, monitors construction programs, and investigates and resolves consumer inquiries and complaints. The Staff also monitors developments at the federal level, and prepares Commission responses where appropriate.

At the end of 2001, there were under the supervision of the Division:

14 Incumbent Investor-owned Local Exchange Telephone Companies  
 181 Competitive Local Exchange Telephone Companies  
 131 Long Distance Telephone Companies  
 495 Private Pay Telephone Providers

### SUMMARY OF 2001 ACTIVITIES

Consumer complaints and protests investigated	6,621
Telephone inquiries received	11,904
Tariff revisions received:	
Incumbent Local Exchange Companies	146
Competitive Local Exchange Companies	201
Interexchange Companies	104
Tariff sheets filed:	
Incumbent Local Exchange Companies	3,315
Competitive Local Exchange Companies	5,344
Interexchange Companies	1,382
Promotional Filings	
Incumbent Local Exchange Companies	23
Competitive Local Exchange Companies	122
Interexchange Companies	82
Cases in which staff members prepared testimony or reports	63
Certificates of Convenience and Necessity granted or amended:	
Competitive Local Exchange Companies	57
Interexchange Companies	49
Interconnection Agreements/Amendments Approved	128
FCC comments filed	1
Extended Area Service studies completed or underway	17
Service Surveillance and Results Analysis Provided Monthly on:	
Access Lines	5,200,926
Switching Offices	464
Business Offices	30
Repair Centers	20
Pay Telephone Registration and Rules Enforcement provided on:	
Private pay telephone providers	495
Private pay telephones	14,823
Local Exchange Company pay telephones	33,440
Pay telephone audits (2 Auditors)	416
Complaints Investigated	20
Visits to:	
Customer premises to resolve customer complaints	6
Company premises to resolve customer complaints	5
Company premises to review service performance	2
Company premises to inspect network reliability	28
Company premises to investigate collocation exemption requests	10
Construction Program reviews	2

#### OTHER:

Continued the Collaborative Committee on local competition market-opening measures:

- Facilitated developing Carrier-to-Carrier Performance Standards for Verizon Virginia.
- Assisted in promulgating Alternative Dispute Resolution Rules.

Assisted the Project Manager in Verizon Virginia's Operations Support System Testing proceeding.

Assisted the Commission in the continued implementation and operation of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

Drafted proposed rules for companies desiring to discontinue competitive local exchange services.

Assisted Commission counsel with respect to formal rate, service, or generic matters.

Assisted in updating and recodifying communications regulations appearing in the Virginia Administrative Code.

Participated in matters affecting communications policy with federal agencies.

Pursued various activities related to the Commission's alternative plans for regulating telephone companies, including the following:

- Reviewed proposed service classifications for new services, and reclassifications for existing services
- Evaluated Individual Case Basis (ICB) and Special Assembly price filings
- Assisted in gathering monitoring data

Implemented legislation to eliminate the requirement for telephone cooperatives to file tariffs, effectively ending regulatory supervision over cooperatives.

Assisted with reports to the legislature and with developing telecommunications legislation.

Continued outreach activities by making presentations to trade and citizens groups, associations, telephone companies, and a legislative committee.

Participated in matters affecting emergency 911 communications procedures with local government agencies and the Virginia Telecommunications Industry Association.

Made 3 presentations to Virginia's 911 organization.

Developed and implemented new Payphone Rules.

Provided guidance to the Atlantic Payphone Association.

Assisted payphone service providers in resolving operations issues with local exchange companies.

Enhanced the Division of Communications' web site to enable consumers to file complaints and post inquiries electronically.

Implemented a new Complaint Tracking System.

Responded to questionnaires from the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners ("NARUC") and others with respect to telecommunications matters.

Reviewed construction budgets of Verizon and Sprint.

Met with local governing bodies and citizens groups regarding local calling areas and service problems.

Selected Telcordia as the thousands-block number pooling/administrator.

Assisted in implementing thousands-block number pooling in three area codes.

Assisted in implementing new area codes in 804 (434) and 540 (276).

Worked with the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing on monitoring the Telecommunications Relay Service in Virginia.

Staff member serves on the NARUC Staff Subcommittee on Communications.

Staff member serves on the NARUC Staff Subcommittee on Depreciation.

Staff member serves on the NARUC Staff Subcommittee on Service Quality.

Staff member serves on the Advisory Council for the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.