

## 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 2002, there were under the supervision of the Division:

14 Incumbent Investor-Owned Local Exchange Telephone Companies  
 186 Competitive Local Exchange Telephone Companies  
 146 Long Distance Telephone Companies  
 429 Payphone Service Providers

### SUMMARY OF 2002 ACTIVITIES

Consumer complaints and protests investigated	5,907
Telephone inquiries received	10,956
Tariff revisions received:	
Incumbent Local Exchange Companies	136
Competitive Local Exchange Companies	172
Interexchange Companies	98
Tariff sheets filed:	
Incumbent Local Exchange Companies	1,356
Competitive Local Exchange Companies	5,178
Interexchange Companies	2,187
Promotional Filings:	
Incumbent Local Exchange Companies	32
Competitive Local Exchange Companies	72
Interexchange Companies	59
Cases in which staff members prepared testimony or reports	43
Certificates of Convenience and Necessity Granted, Amended, or Canceled:	
Competitive Local Exchange Companies	49
Interexchange Companies	32
Interconnection Agreements/Amendments Approved or Dismissed	136
FCC comments filed	2
Extended Area Service studies completed or underway	14
Service Surveillance and Results Analysis Provided Monthly on:	
Telephone Companies	10
Access Lines	5,064,537
Switching Offices	436
Payphone Registration and Rules Enforcement provided on:	
Local Exchange Company payphone service providers	16
Local Exchange Company payphones	30,728
Private payphone service providers	413
Private payphones	13,980
Payphone audits (2 Auditors)	653
Complaints Investigated	27
Court Cases	9
Visits to:	
Customer premises to resolve customer complaints	4
Company premises to resolve customer complaints	2
Company premises to review service performance	10
Company premises to investigate collocation exemption requests	15
Construction Program reviews	2

#### OTHER:

Continued the Collaborative Committee on local competition market-opening measures:  
 - Adopted performance assurance plan for Verizon Virginia.

Assisted the Hearing Examiner with Verizon Virginia's 271 application.

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

Drafted proposed rules for localities to be certificated as local exchange companies.

Drafted proposed rules for retail service quality and 911 service.

Conducted state-wide consumer and business service quality survey.

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

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.

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

Implemented new Payphone Rules.

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

Made two presentations to Congressional Staff.

Reviewed construction budgets of Verizon and Sprint.

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

Managed Virginia's telephone number utilization program.

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

Hosted a Delegation of Romanian Telecom Regulatory Officials.

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.