

## 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, and assists in carrying out provisions of the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996. 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 2004, there were under the supervision of the Division:

14 Incumbent Investor-owned Local Exchange Telephone Companies  
 193 Competitive Local Exchange Telephone Companies  
 136 Long Distance Telephone Companies  
 351 Payphone Service Providers

### SUMMARY OF 2004 ACTIVITIES

Consumer complaints and protests investigated	6,315
Tariff revisions received:	
Incumbent Local Exchange Companies	174
Competitive Local Exchange Companies	118
Interexchange Companies	105
Tariff sheets filed:	
Incumbent Local Exchange Companies	847
Competitive Local Exchange Companies	3,671
Interexchange Companies	1,258
Promotional Filings	
Incumbent Local Exchange Companies	49
Competitive Local Exchange Companies	186
Interexchange Companies	38
Cases in which staff members prepared testimony, reports, or comments	28
Certificates of Convenience and Necessity granted, amended, or canceled:	
Competitive Local Exchange Companies	38
Interexchange Companies	35
Interconnection Agreements/Amendments approved or dismissed	49
Extended Area Service studies completed or underway	2
Service surveillance and results analysis provided monthly on:	
Telephone Companies	15
Access Lines	4,948,428
Payphone registration and rules enforcement provided on:	
Local Exchange Company payphone service providers	13
Local Exchange Company payphones	25,078
Private payphone service providers	338
Private payphones	11,162
Payphone audits	466
Complaints Investigated	32
Court Cases	1
Field investigations	42

#### OTHER:

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

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

Monitored Verizon Virginia's Performance Assurance Plan:

- Replicating monthly results
- Monitored audit
- Evaluated waiver request for Hurricane Isabel

Implemented revised rules for interconnection agreements.

Implemented 911 rules.

Filed comments on IP -Enabled Services (Voice over Internet Protocol) at the Federal Communications Commission in WC Docket No. 04-36.

Prepared staff report on Hurricane Isabel.

Prepared communications section of staff report on undergrounding utility distribution lines.

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 database of payphone lines.

Drafted revised payphone rules.

Attended regional Atlantic Payphone Association quarterly meetings.

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

Conducted operational reviews with Sprint, Verizon, and Cavalier.

Implemented revised division website.

Prepared guidelines for telephone companies' use in implementing the sales and use tax surcharge.

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.

Several staff members were trained in conversational Spanish.

Staff member serves on the NARUC Staff Subcommittee on Communications.

Staff member serves on the NARUC Staff Subcommittee on Depreciation and Technology .

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.