

DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS

The Division of Communications assists the Commission in carrying out its duties as prescribed by the Code of Virginia. The Division monitors, enforces and makes recommendations on certain rates, tariffs, and operating procedures of telecommunications utilities. The Division enforces service standards, assures compliance with tariff regulations, coordinates extended area service studies, enforces pay telephone regulations, and prescribes depreciation rates. The staff testifies in rate, service, and generic hearings and meets with the general 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 follows developments at the federal level, and prepares Commission responses where appropriate.

SUMMARY OF 1995 ACTIVITIES

Consumer complaints and protests investigated	2,691
Telephone inquiries received	2,400
Tariff revisions received	243
Tariff sheets filed	3,191
Cases in which staff members prepared testimony or reports	25
Certificates of Convenience and Necessity granted or amended	2
Depreciation studies completed	1
Extended Area Services studies completed or underway	30
Service Surveillance and Results Analysis Provided	
Monthly on:	
Access Lines	3,990,000
Switching Offices	428
Business Offices	24
Repair Centers	9
Pay Telephone Registration and Rules Enforcement provided on:	
Registered private pay telephone providers	533
Private pay telephones	11,800
LEC pay telephones	ALL
Pay telephone audits	90
Visits to:	
Customer premises to resolve customer complaints	7
Company premises to resolve customer complaints	2
Company premises to review service performance	46
Company premises to inspect network reliability	1
Construction Program reviews	3

OTHER:

Assisted Commission in promulgating rules for local service competition pursuant to legislation effective July 1, 1995.

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

- Provided cost allocation technical support for six Annual Informational Filing audit reports
- Processed one revenue neutral tariff filing pursuant to Paragraph 17
- Reviewed proposed service classifications for new services, and reclassifications for existing services
- Assisted in gathering monitoring data

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

Participated in matters affecting communications policy with federal agencies.

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

Made presentations to trade and citizens groups, associations, and telephone companies.

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

Participated in task force on uniform pay telephone consumer information.

Provided guidance to Virginia Payphone Association in its organization.

Assisted private pay telephone providers in resolving operations issues with local exchange companies.

Furnished annual verification information to the Federal Communications Commission to recertify eligibility for the Virginia Universal Service Plan, which provides assistance for low income telephone customers.

Responded to questionnaires from NARUC and others with respect to telecommunications matters.

Reviewed construction budgets of major telephone companies for 1995-1999 period.

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

Worked with Va. Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing on monitoring of Telecommunications Relay Service in Virginia and preparation of a request for proposal for new contract.

Director reappointed to the NARUC Staff subcommittee on Communications.

Staff member reappointed to the NARUC Staff subcommittee on Depreciation.

Staff member appointed to the NARUC Staff subcommittee on Communications.

Staff member reappointed to the NARUC Staff subcommittee on Service Quality.