

## 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, 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 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 1997 ACTIVITIES

Consumer complaints and protests investigated	7,072
Telephone inquiries received	7,820
Tariff revisions received:	
Interexchange Companies	78
Incumbent Local Exchange Companies	177
Competitive Local Exchange Companies	35
Tariff sheets filed:	
Interexchange Companies	599
Incumbent Local Exchange Companies	2,925
Competitive Local Exchange Companies	2,807
Cases in which staff members prepared testimony or reports	54
Certificates of Convenience and Necessity granted or amended:	
Interexchange Carriers	14
Competitive Local Exchange Carriers	27
Interconnection Agreements Approved	52
Depreciation studies completed	2
Extended Area Services studies completed or underway	24
Service Surveillance and Results Analysis Provided Monthly on:	
Access Lines	4,422,774
Switching Offices	428
Business Offices	26
Repair Centers	11
Pay Telephone Registration and Rules Enforcement provided on:	
Registered private pay telephone providers	565
Private pay telephones	11,445
Local Exchange Company pay telephones	37,105
Pay telephone audits	287
Visits to:	
Customer premises to resolve customer complaints	46
Company premises to resolve customer complaints	28
Company premises to review service performance	57
Company premises to inspect network reliability	18
Construction Program reviews	3

#### OTHER:

Assisted Commission in continued implementation of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, including the following:

- Approved revisions to the Virginia Universal Service Plan to require additional rate reductions for qualifying low-income consumers.
- Approved discounts for services to schools and libraries.
- Designated local exchange companies as eligible to receive universal service support.

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

- Evaluated filings for two additions to existing competitive services.
- 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.

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

Processed one small investor-owned telephone company and one cooperative rate change application.

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 Industry Association.

Provided guidance to Virginia Payphone Association in its organization.

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

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

Reviewed construction budgets of major telephone companies for 1997-1998 period.

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

Worked with Virginia 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 reappointed to the NARUC Staff subcommittee on Communications.

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