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PUBLIC FIELD HEARING – BASIC FACTS

An Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) public field hearing is a formal, legal proceeding.

- An Administrative Law Judge presides with at least one Commissioner present. A court reporter records testimony.

The sole purpose of the field hearing is to accept sworn testimony from consumers under oath.

- Commissioners are not allowed to answer questions, as they will weigh the evidence and render a decision.
- OUCC and IURC staff members are available to answer questions on an individual basis.

Consumers may make sworn oral or written comments for the record.

- Written and sworn oral comments receive equal consideration.

No final decisions are made at field hearings.

812 AREA CODE RELIEF: THE OPTIONS

The supply of available numbers for the **812 area code** is projected to run out in 2015. As a result, a new area code will need to be added. The **Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC)** will choose one of two methods, either an **overlay** or a **geographic split**.

- Since 1995, new area codes have been implemented in more than 35 states, most Canadian provinces and throughout the Caribbean due to technological advances (including wireless phones, fax machines, etc.) that have required much greater use of new telephone numbers.
- In the early 2000s, the 812 area code was projected to run out of numbers in 2004. However, number conservation efforts were introduced at the state level in 2001 and have extended 812's lifespan by nearly a decade.

With an **overlay**, the new area code would occupy the same area as 812, but would be assigned only to **new** customers and communications devices. All consumers who now have 812 numbers would be able to keep their existing phone numbers.

- Ten-digit dialing (area code + number) would be required for all local calls.
- Businesses, not-for-profit organizations, and other customers would not need to reprint signage, stationery, advertising, and/or business cards due to the change.
- The vast majority of new area codes introduced in the United States and Canada since 2005 have been implemented through overlays. These include the 364 area code that is currently being implemented in western Kentucky, to relieve 270. Indiana's other neighboring states have implemented overlays to varying degrees.

With a **geographic split**, the 812 region would be divided into 2 or more areas. One area would keep 812 while customers in the other area(s) would change to a new area code.

- Seven-digit dialing would still be used for local calls.
- Businesses, not-for-profit organizations, and other customers in the area(s) with the new code(s) would need to reprint signage, stationery, advertising, and/or business cards due to the change, and would incur the costs for doing so.
- The geographic split was the primary method for adding new area codes before 2005 and was used to relieve Indiana's 317 (in 1996) and 219 (in 2001) area codes.

The following will not be affected, regardless of which option is chosen:

- Telephone rates and charges
- Local calling areas (in other words, calls that are now free will remain free)
- 911, 811 and 211 services

A decision is expected later this year. It will be followed by a grace period that allows the new area code to be phased in.

812 AREA CODE RELIEF: THE PENDING CASE

The **North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA)** oversees and assigns telephone area codes in the United States. NANPA filed a petition and exhibits seeking relief for the 812 area with the **Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC)** on August 3, 2012. The petition recommends the use of an overlay; however, it offers 7 options for geographic splits if the IURC chooses that method.

The IURC is conducting a series of ten public field hearings throughout the 812 area in March, April and May.

NANPA is scheduled to file any additional testimony by April 24, 2013.

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) is a state agency, separate from the IURC, and is the statutory representative for the interests of all consumers in IURC cases. The OUCC is scheduled to file written testimony on May 15, 2013.

Additional parties that have intervened in this case as allowed by law are also scheduled to file testimony on May 15. These parties include the Indiana Telecommunications Association (ITA), AT&T Indiana, and Smithville Communications.

An IURC technical evidentiary hearing is scheduled to start on June 18, 2013 in Room 222 of the PNC Center (101 W. Washington St.) in Indianapolis. Evidentiary hearings are open to the public but participation is typically limited to attorney cross-examination and Commission questioning of technical witnesses who have filed written testimony.

The case's formal parties will file proposed orders, the equivalent of closing arguments, on dates to be confirmed after the May hearing.

IURC final orders are issued at the Commission's weekly Conferences. Conferences are typically held on Wednesday afternoons, with agendas posted 48 hours in advance at: www.in.gov/iurc/2428.htm.

After an order is issued, the new area code will be phased in over a grace period of several months.

All hearing and filing dates are subject to change. A settlement agreement is possible in any legal proceeding.

TO LEARN MORE

All publicly filed documents in this case are available on the IURC Website:

- Visit www.in.gov/iurc
- Click the "Electronic Document System" link in the upper right portion of the page
- Click the "Search Cases" link near the upper left corner of the following page
- Enter docket number 44233 in the first field on the search page

Case updates are also available on the OUCC Website at www.in.gov/oucc/2718.htm.

GENERAL AGENCY INFORMATION

Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC)

- State agency
- Represents the interests of all Indiana utility consumers, including residential, commercial and industrial customer interests, in cases before the IURC and federal utility regulatory commissions
- Staff of attorneys, accountants, engineers, economists, consumer services and support personnel

Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC)

- State agency
- Regulates many - but not all - Indiana utilities including rates, financing, service territory, quality, etc.
- Required by law to make decisions that balance the interests of utilities and consumers