

The State Scene

A Numbering Resource Publication for State Public Utility Commissions

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STATE ROUNDUP

California

The quarterly statewide meeting was held on March 15. During that meeting, discussion took place about the possibility of holding more public meetings before implementing the geographic split in the 310 NPA. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) named NeuStar as the Interim Pooling Administrator (PA) for six more NPAs (408, 650, 510, 619, 562, and 858). Telcordia will serve as the PA in three (916, 323, and 925).

Washington

The FCC clarified that the delegated authority for pooling trials in Washington did not include the 509 NPA, following Qwest's petition seeking clarification. The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission plans to request additional authority for the 509 NPA.

Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Energy (MDTE) named NeuStar as Interim PA for the 339, 351, 413, 508, 617, 774, 781, 857, and 978 NPAs. The first implementation meeting was held on March 27.

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VOLUNTARY RETURN OF CODES INCREASING

Following the NRO Order last fall, NANPA has been working with the FCC, states and the industry to work out reclamation guidelines and to send out reclamation lists to the states. Since that began, NANPA has seen an increase in the number of voluntarily returned resources.

In the five-month period from May-September 2000, 1,450 assigned codes were "disconnected," that is, returned voluntarily or reclaimed. In the five months since, through February 2001, 2,296 additional codes have been disconnected. For the most part, carriers are voluntarily returning codes. Since the end of 2000, when the new FCC-mandated reclamation process was introduced, roughly 90% of all code returns have been voluntary.

In the new reclamation paradigm, state commissions have been empowered to decide whether or not to reclaim central office codes that are not put into service. Currently, 29 state commissions participate in the reclamation process. The FCC makes the decision for delinquent codes in the remaining states. **NeuStar**

NANPA, STATES WORKING TOGETHER ON STANDARDIZED REPORTS

At its February NANC meeting, NANC directed NANPA to continue working with state commissions in developing a set of standard reports. On March 9, NANPA conducted a conference call to again review the standard reports being proposed and attempt to reach agreement on an initial set of reports. On this call, NANPA and the 15 states participating on the call reached agreement to move forward with the standard reports as presented by NANPA at the February NANC meeting.

During this call, several states offered suggestions on how to enhance the reports. NANPA

is currently examining how it can incorporate these suggestions into the reports. Also, it must be emphasized that both NANPA and the states agreed that the development of standard reports was an evolving process, a work in progress. Additional enhancements and possibly other reports will be added in the future as states start using the new reports and have other ideas on data that is needed.

The first weekly and monthly CO code activity reports are posted to the NANPA web site, www.nanpa.com, under the Central Office Code (Prefixes) section. **NeuStar**



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Thomas L. Welch

PROFILE ON: THOMAS L. WELCH, CHAIRMAN MAINE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

In the fraternity of one-area code states, Maine and the 207 NPA have held their ground in protecting their special status. And the Chairman of the Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC), Tom Welch, and his staff have been leading that effort.

After the initial industry meeting in June 1998, Welch said it became clear to many folks that another area code would significantly impact the state's economy, which is heavily dependent on tourism, and would especially harm smaller businesses. In addition, government and regulatory officials worried that adding another area code to a small state that is already somewhat separated by the denser population and more diverse economy of the south versus the more sparsely populated and more rural life in the north would further divide the state.

"When we started looking at what it would mean to have two area codes in the state, it became an issue," Welch said. "In looking at the numbers, we wondered why we needed another [area code] when there's only 1.2 million residents in the state."

Thus began Chairman Welch and the Maine PUC's battle to delay the overlay NPA, which was then scheduled to be implemented in the summer of 2000. Thousands-block number pooling, which began in June 2000, played an important role in delaying the exhaust of the NPA, which is currently projected to last until 3rd quarter 2002 but, with the implementation of pooling and other conservation measure, for many years beyond that, according to Welch and PUC estimates.

"It would be nice to see a few of the benefits of competition before we get all of the burdens."

"What made a difference was timing because number pooling was on the horizon," said Welch, who was appointed Chairman of the Maine PUC in May 1993 and will serve until March 2005. Another factor that benefited the PUC's efforts was receiving delegated authority from the FCC in September 1999 to implement number optimization measures. "It also helped that my staff, led by Trina Bragdon, has been exceptionally creative and aggressive in finding solutions.

"We've been more rigorous in enforcing how [carriers] are using codes," Welch said. The PUC has also implemented proceedings

to reclaim codes and to provide alternate mechanisms to enhance competition without misusing codes. "It would be nice to see a few of the benefits of competition before we get all of the burdens," Welch said.

Welch and the Maine PUC have been working with other states and federal regulators to study and explore other relief measures that would slow the need for new area codes. "A lot of states picked up on what we were doing," Welch noted. "There is a coalition growing in all states, not just the small ones," in their desire to slow or eliminate the need for new NPAs.

Welch and others spent time with federal regulators explaining what was going on from a state's perspective, and found the FCC to be receptive. It's important for the FCC to understand that not all states operate the same, Welch said, and that "there should be local variation in how problems are solved."

"States are in a much better position to work with NANPA and have first line at enforcement authority" with carriers, Welch noted, adding that he agrees that carriers shouldn't have to face 50 different sets of regulations. However, he believes that the industry owes their customers – and regulators – a little more creativity in dealing with problems and finding appropriate solutions. "The industry, in general, has cut back on customer service far more than they're willing to admit."

"States are in a much better position to work with NANPA and have first line at enforcement authority."

Welch did note that the Maine PUC has enjoyed success with carriers in reclaiming numbers. "We told carriers to go through their inventory and to give them back, and they have done that." To date, the Maine PUC has ordered 50 codes to be returned

If states, such as Maine, hadn't taken steps in delaying the exhaust of area codes, Welch said he thinks the industry would be trying to figure out how to replace the NANP. "If no one had done anything, it wouldn't have taken much at all (to exhaust the NANP)."

"The FCC was beginning to see the problem, but they found it very helpful for a strong state constituency to come to them with solutions," Welch added. "We got in there and helped prevent it from being much worse than it was." **NeuStar**



E. Leon Jacobs, Jr.

PROFILE ON: E. LEON JACOBS, JR., CHAIRMAN FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

When the state of Florida began experiencing area code proliferation several years ago – third only to California and Texas – the citizens of The Sunshine State got involved and educated themselves on a topic that sends ripple effects throughout the country. And that made an

impact on the front line of the issue, Leon Jacobs, the Chairman of Florida’s Public Service Commission.

“I’ve been impressed by the level of awareness from consumers – they understand the issues and options,” said Jacobs, who was appointed to a four-year term on the PSC in January 1998, and began serving his two-year term as Chairman in January.

For example, in the 941 NPA in the Sarasota/Manatee area, local government officials spearheaded a broad awareness campaign regarding the new area code change. Public response in the coastal areas and inner counties was very strong and provided input on how the NPA change should occur. “Consumers came in and were very actively involved and worked beyond what the industry and our staff recommended.”

Another factor that concerned the public and the PSC, Jacobs said, was the impact that changing and/or adding area codes had on the state’s tourist industry.

“I am real concerned that we are not getting numbers back as efficiently as we could.”

“The rapid evolution of codes is especially troubling in tourist areas,” Jacobs said, because many tourist attractions advertise nationally and it’s hard to maintain the changes, as well as inform consumers of the changes. Businesses, to their credit, “are trying to make it a positive,” he noted, by asking for ‘vanity’ phone numbers that consumers can easily remember.

Jacobs and his staff are tackling this issue, in part, by trying to reclaim as many blocks of numbers as possible, thereby extending the life of area codes and staving off adding new area codes. “I’m real concerned that we’re not getting numbers back as efficiently as we could,” he said.

“We can’t predict or have any level of assurance how long [NXX] codes will last,” Jacobs said. “We need to explore reclamation and rate center consolidation in earnest in hopes of deterring new area codes.

Florida has also implemented thousands-block number pooling, in hopes of delaying the need for new area codes. To date, NeuStar is administering number pooling in the 954, 561 and 904 NPAs, and will turn it up in the 305 NPA in May.

Key to the success of winning the area code war, Jacobs said, is to have all of the players involved working together. “To the extent that we can work through the issues together, that’s what I feel like we need to do,” he noted.

Jacobs, the Chairman of NARUC’s Committee on Consumer Affairs, would also like to see better cooperation between the states and the FCC. “I don’t think they can do all of this alone.” States can’t guess how FCC is going to act or react, Jacobs said, such as the decision on who will be selected for the National Pooling Administrator.

“Inefficient distribution of numbers imposes unnecessary costs to the network.”

He’d also like to see the FCC emphasize that numbering is a competitive issue and that the “inefficient distribution of numbers imposes unnecessary costs to the network.”

The process needs to be better streamlined to facilitate competition for carriers. “We’ve now gotten so deeply involved in the technical issues, it would be helpful to re-focus our energy on why this is happening.”

“We’re not immune to the service providers’ concerns,” Jacobs said. “We can’t impose revenue losses to them, but we need to work together.”

He would also like to see NANPA highlight technical issues for lay people in the respective state commissions. “NANPA has the birds’ eye view more than anyone...guide us to help prioritize our issues and garner the process to consensus,” Jacobs said.

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REGIONAL CONFERENCE CALLS

CENTRAL REGION

AL, AR, IA, IL, IN, KY,
LA, MI, MN, MO, MS,
TN, TX, WI

**Thurs., April 19,
10 a.m. (CST)**

Bridge: 800-321-3913
Passcode: 6268626

WESTERN REGION

AK, AZ, CA, CNMI, CO,
Guam, HI, ID, KS, MT,
ND, NE, NM, NV, OK,
OR, SD, UT, WA, WY

**Thurs., April 19,
11 a.m. (PST)**

Bridge: 800-321-3913
Passcode: 6268626

EASTERN REGION

CT, DC, DE, GA, FL, MA,
MD, ME, NC, NH, NJ, NY,
OH, PA, PR, RI, SC, USVI,
VA, VT, WV

**Fri., April 20,
11 a.m. (EST)**

Bridge: 800-321-3913
Passcode: 6263646
From PR dial: 847-413-2418
Passcode: 6268626

QUALITY OF NRUF FILINGS IMPROVING

During the second cycle of the Number Resources Utilization & Forecast (NRUF) data, NANPA saw marked improvement in the quality of carrier filings. With fewer “on the surface” errors, NANPA’s NRUF team will be allowed to more deeply analyze the data for anomalies and inconsistencies. There are a number of reasons for the improvement in the data during this phase:

- In December, NANPA held an NRUF class for service providers (SPs)
- NRUF filing form has been updated to include a data check capability
- NANPA has posted an NRUF job aide to its web site (www.nanpa.com) that is designed to answer questions on NRUF filing that may not be addressed in the instructions included on the actual NRUF form used by SPs for filing

- Carriers have become more familiar with the filing process.

With the February 1 filing, NANPA received over 4,000 NRUF submissions. “Our NRUF team is small, but worked quickly to get the data sifted through and sent out to the states, where potentially more detailed analysis can be done,” said Beth Sprague, NRUF Manager.

Data was distributed to requesting states beginning March 9. There has also been an increased interest from state commissions looking for access to the NRUF data. As of April 1, NANPA had received 28 letters from state commissions expressing an interest in receiving the data while certifying their ability to protect the proprietary data.

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STATE ROUNDUP *(continued from page 1)*

Arizona

The Arizona Corporation Commission ordered a geographic split of the 520 NPA on February 13. Jeopardy was declared on March 2 in the 520 NPA, and a Jeopardy meeting was held on March 13, in conjunction with the 520-928 initial implementation meeting.

New Jersey

On March 19, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities issued an order for overlays in the 201, 732 and 973 NPAs. Permissive 10-digit dialing is to begin July 1.

Iowa

The Iowa Utilities Board opened Docket NOI-00-3 on the Efficient Use of Telephone Numbers and held an informal workshop on number conservation measures on January 17. The next meeting is scheduled for April 10,

and rate center consolidation in the 319 NPA will be the topic of discussion.

Recent Delegated Authority petitions granted: February 13 – Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts (413 NPA), and New Jersey; March 14 – Oklahoma, Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri (816 NPA), Tennessee (615 NPA), Utah, Vermont, and West Virginia. **NeuStar**

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