

**PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF OREGON
STAFF REPORT
PUBLIC MEETING DATE: September 13, 2005**

REGULAR X CONSENT _____ EFFECTIVE DATE September 13, 2005

DATE: September 2, 2005

TO: Public Utility Commission

FROM: Dave Booth

THROUGH: Phil Nyegaard and Lee Sparling

SUBJECT: OREGON UNIVERSAL SERVICE (OUS) ADVISORY BOARD: Approval of candidate for open OUS Advisory Board position.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The Commission should appoint Rommel Raj, President of OregonTel, LLC, to fill an open position on the Oregon Universal Service (OUS) Advisory Board, effective immediately. The position represents competitive telecommunications providers. The term of office for this appointment ends December 31, 2007.

DISCUSSION:

In docket UM 731, the Commission established an OUS Advisory Board (Board) consisting of ten members. See Order No. 99-197. One member is from the Commission's staff. The other nine members are as follows:

- Three from telecommunications utilities;
- Three from competitive telecommunications providers;
- One from radio common carriers;
- One from a consumer group representing residential customers; and
- One from among business customers.

The Commission established the following functions for the Board:

- Assist and advise the Commission in the selection of the OUS Administrator;
- Advise the Administrator and Commission regarding the effective operation of the OUS Fund;

- Assist the Administrator in reviewing and identifying irregularities in information provided on OUS worksheets;
- Provide an interface between the Administrator and telecommunications providers to resolve problems or disputes and to recommend appropriate actions; and
- Assist the Commission in evaluating the success of the OUS program.

Membership on the Board is limited to three consecutive years by any member representing a particular company. Members may seek reappointment to another term. The terms are staggered so that no more than one-third of the members will be new in any one year. The Commission's staff membership is permanent. Information about current Board members and their terms of office is available on the Commission's web site.

One of three positions representing competitive telecommunications providers is currently open. The term of the open position expires December 31, 2007. On July 21, 2005, staff mailed a letter seeking nominations to fill the vacant position. Staff provided a nomination form, and set a filing deadline of August 11, 2005. Staff also established a committee to review the nominations and recommend an appointment for the Commission's consideration. Members of the selection committee are Vicki McLean, Phil Nyegaard, and Mike Grant.

Staff received two nominations to fill the vacant position. The nominees are:

Rommel Raj, President, OregonTel, LLC;
Richard W. Ryan, President, Hunter Communications, Inc.

The selection committee met on August 31, 2005. Both nominees are well qualified. Each directs a small Oregon-based telecommunications company. Hunter Communications, Inc. is headquartered in Medford. OregonTel, LLC is headquartered in McMinnville. Mr. Ryan previously served on the Board. His term expired December 31, 2004. The committee recommends the Commission appoint Rommel Raj to fill the open position. The committee decided in favor of Mr. Raj because, as a newcomer, his appointment would bring a fresh perspective to the Board's deliberations.

OUS Advisory Board
September 2, 2005
Page 3

PROPOSED COMMISSION MOTION:

Rommel Raj, President of OregonTel, LLC, be appointed to the open position on the OUS Advisory Board representing competitive telecommunications providers, effective immediately, with term of office ending December 31, 2007.