

**PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF OREGON
STAFF REPORT
PUBLIC MEETING DATE: November 24, 2009**

REGULAR _____ **CONSENT** X **EFFECTIVE DATE** September 30, 2009

DATE: November 24, 2009

TO: Public Utility Commission

FROM: Jon Cray, RSPF Manager

THROUGH: Rick Willis and David Poston

SUBJECT: RESIDENTIAL SERVICE PROTECTION FUND (RSPF): Commission Approval of Telecommunication Devices Access Program Advisory Committee Members and Oregon Telecommunications Relay Service Industry Advisory Committee Members.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Commission approves Cathy-Lynne Bovee, Lisa Hastings and Steve Apotheker as the respective hard of hearing, deaf and speech disabled community representatives on the Telecommunication Devices Access Program Advisory Committee (TDAPAC) until September 30, 2011. Staff also recommends that Ingo Henningsen, from Frontier Communications, and Barbara Young, from CenturyLink (formerly Embarq), be approved as members of the Oregon Telecommunications Relay Service (OTRS) Industry Advisory Committee. Term limitations are not imposed on OTRS Industry Advisory Committee members.

DISCUSSION:

Pursuant to Chapter 290, Oregon Laws 1987, Sections 9 to 16, the TDAPAC advises the PUC concerning matters of general development, implementation and administration of the Telecommunication Devices Access Program (TDAP). The TDAP purchases and loans specialized telecommunications equipment at no cost to Oregonians, who are deaf, severely hearing and/or speech impaired, or have other physical conditions that require adaptive equipment to use the telephone.

Chapter 290, Oregon Laws 1987, Section 12 stipulates that the advisory committee consist of twelve members, including nine consumers with disabilities, one professional

in the field of hearing or speech impairment or deafness, one representative from the telephone companies and one representative from the Public Utility Commission.

The Commission established the OTRS Industry Advisory Committee in 1995 by Order No. 95-087 consisting of representatives from the telecommunications industry. The purpose of the committee is to address issues relating to the quality and cost of the OTRS. The committee facilitates the exchange of information among providers and users of the OTRS with Commission staff. It also focuses on operational issues and pursues ways to make the OTRS as cost-effective as possible. It seeks ways to ensure a high quality of service while minimizing costs. The TDAP Advisory Committee and the OTRS Industry Advisory Committee meet biannually and quarterly, respectively.

Prior to the October 5, 2009 meeting, the TDAPAC members accepted my recommendation to have Cathy-Lynne Bovee as a candidate to represent the hard of hearing community, Lisa Hastings as a candidate to represent the deaf community and Steve Apotheker as a candidate to represent the speech disabled community on the TDAPAC. In addition to her personal perspective, Ms. Bovee will be an essential resource for the Commission's committee based on her efforts and credentials in educating college students and businesses about a variety of disability issues including but not limited to the telecommunications relay service, Braille materials and guidelines for service animals.

As an active member of many organizations such as the National Association for the Deaf, Deaf Women United and Deaf Women of Washington and Oregon and with her extensive background as an English as a Second Language Instructor, Ms. Hastings will be an asset for the TDAPAC and Oregonians who rely on the services provided by the Commission when offering her personal experience as a deaf woman and demonstrating her leadership skills, knowledge and awareness of the telecommunication needs of people who are deaf and have other disorders.

Mr. Apotheker will make a significant contribution to the RSPF programs and to Oregon citizens by using his government occupational skills in addition to sharing his own experiences of living with a speech disability which requires adaptive telephone technology and speech strategies. All individuals' diverse experiences will help the Commission continue its commitment and goal in providing all our customers independent and successful access to the rapidly evolving telecommunications industry.

With the proposed acquisition from Verizon, Frontier Communications will become one of the largest carriers in Oregon. Mr. Henningsen expressed his interest in offering his company's perspective as both a small rural carrier and soon to be much larger provider. Prior to joining Frontier Communications as a government and external affairs

manager, Mr. Henningsen served as a financial auditor, policy advisor and telecommunications section manager at the Utah Division of Public Utilities for 21 years. Ms. Young has 26 years of experience in the telecommunications industry including revenue planning and research and governmental regulatory affairs management. She recently replaced Mary Gumm, who was on the OTRS Industry Advisory Committee since March 2009. As the CenturyLink State Executive for Oregon, Ms. Young will offer her experience in regulatory affairs for services including the federal Lifeline low-income assistance program. Both individuals will support the Commission in its goals to provide high quality service while minimizing costs. On Tuesday, June 16, 2010 current members of the OTRS Industry Advisory Committee approved the candidacy of Mr. Henningsen and Ms. Young.

PROPOSED COMMISSION MOTION:

I move that the Commission approve Cathy-Lynne Bovee and Lisa Hastings as members of the TDAP Advisory Committee with their terms expiring on September 30, 2011. Additionally, I move the Commission to approve Ingo Henningsen and Barbara Young as members of the OTRS Industry Advisory Committee with no term restrictions.