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Cincinnati, Ohio 45201-2301

April 13, 2000

Ms. Daisy Crockron  
Docketing Division  
Public Utilities Commission of Ohio  
180 East Broad Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43266-0573

Re: *In the Matter of the Commission Investigation Into the Allocation of Abbreviated Dialing Arrangements, Such as N11, Case No. 93-1799-TP-COI*

Dear Ms. Crockron:

Enclosed are an original and 11 copies of the Initial Comments of Cincinnati Bell Telephone Company in the above referenced proceeding. Please date stamp one copy and return it in the self addressed stamped envelope.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (513) 397-1248.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert J. Wentz".

Robert J. Wentz  
Cincinnati Bell Telephone Company

Enclosure

This is to certify that the images appearing are an accurate and complete reproduction of a case file document delivered in the regular course of business.  
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**BEFORE  
THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO**

In the Matter of the Commission	)	
Investigation Into the Allocation of	)	Case No. 93-1799-TP-COI
Abbreviated Dialing Arrangements, Such as N11	)	

**INITIAL COMMENTS  
OF  
CINCINNATI BELL TELEPHONE**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

On December 3, 1999 the Ohio Council of Information and Referral Providers ("OCIRP") and the 211 Ohio Collaborative ("211 Ohio"), [herein collectively referred to as "Joint Applicants"] filed an Application seeking authority for the assignment of the abbreviated dialing code "211" for use by human services information and referral service. On March 23, 2000, the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio ("PUCO" or "Commission") issued an Entry that established a procedural schedule for Initial Comments and Reply Comments. In response to the Commission's March 23 Entry, Cincinnati Bell Telephone Company ("CBT"), hereby files its Initial Comments in this matter.

**II. The Joint Applications Have Not Demonstrated a Sufficient Public Need to Justify the Use of a Scarce Public Resource.**

The Commission recognizes that abbreviated dialing patterns are an extremely scarce and finite public resource. Given that the use of 211 would substantially reduce a scare resource, CBT believes that such a use should be reserved for those occasions

when there has been a substantial showing of a public benefit to be derived from its use. Given the previous actions taken by the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") and the current utilization of other N11 dialing codes, there are only two abbreviated dialing patterns that remain available for assignment -- 211 and 511. Therefore, the Joint Applicants should address how the proposed utilization of the 211 dialing code for community resource information and as a referral system satisfies the requirement of a public need. There already appears to be a conflict for the use of 211 as CBT is utilizing 211 as an experiment with the Advanced Regional Traffic Interactive Measurement & Information System in conjunction with the Ohio Department of Transportation. Two significantly different entities having competing interests for 211 is a concern of CBT's particularly when it comes to an allocation of a scarce resource.

CBT wishes to strongly emphasize that it does not dispute the value of the work performed by or the necessity of the services offered by the Joint Applicants. To the contrary, CBT is an ardent supporter of the United Way agencies and is one of the leading companies in the Cincinnati area in supporting the fine work done by the United Way. In fact, this year, Barbara Stonebraker, a senior executive for CBT is leading the Greater Cincinnati campaign. However, CBT believes that requests for abbreviated dialing codes, such as 211, must be measured against a very high standard in order to satisfy the "public need" requirement. Clearly, the "911" emergency dialing code satisfies that requirement and has been implemented on a nationwide basis. The establishment of 311 as the non-emergency dialing code on a nationwide basis approached this high threshold of "public need" for the utilization of this admittedly

scarce resource. The availability of 311 to contact local law enforcement agencies for non-emergency assistance provides a benefit to the general public, including all of the citizens in CBT's operating territory.

CBT notes, however, that the implementation of 311, while national in scope, was ordered by the FCC to be implemented only as the need arose locally, and then only upon request by an "entity [for example a local police chief or local fire chief] to use 311 for access to non-emergency police and other government services in a particular jurisdiction..."<sup>1</sup> To date, CBT has not received a local request to utilize 311 within its operating territory. CBT believes the Commission should consider a similar requirement if 211 were to be implemented as suggested by the Joint Applicants.

### **III. The Joint Applicants Have Failed to Address, and the Commission Must Consider, Many Administrative Difficulties Posed by Nationwide 211.**

CBT would also hope that the Commission fully considers a number of administrative concerns posed by nationwide 211 service as suggested by the Joint Applicants. For example, the Joint Applicants have not addressed how 211 will be administered and what geographical area(s) should be included for those people making a call to the "local 211 center".<sup>2</sup> While the Joint Applicants have outlined who they are and how many respective agencies their organizations include, they have failed to identify a lead or dominant organization. This failure could lead to an infinite number of agencies, all within a single service area, requesting that they be the provider of 211 service, thereby forcing the local exchange carriers ("LECs") to either somehow pick

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<sup>1</sup> First report and Order, 12 FCC Red. At 5595 (Para. 35)

<sup>2</sup> Application of the Ohio Council of Information & Referral Providers and the 211 Ohio Collaborative for Assignment of Abbreviated Dialing and Arrangement ("Application"), page 8

one of the requestors to be the provider agency or provide simultaneous service to several agencies. In fact, the Joint Applicants state only that "Not-for-profit information and referral service organizations may serve as call centers." <sup>3</sup> The resulting legal and/or administrative nightmares of why one agency was chosen over another or which exchange within the LECs' operating area is routed to which agency would outweigh the public benefits of providing 211 as an abbreviated dialing code.

The boundaries of CBT's central offices are not coterminous with the political subdivisions (*i.e.*, cities and counties) within CBT's operating territory. For example, the Cincinnati exchange includes not only the City of Cincinnati but also many other cities such as Norwood, Montgomery, and Mariemont. The boundary of Hamilton County includes, in whole or part, several CBT exchanges. The CBT service territory includes all or part of 4 counties in Ohio, 6 in Kentucky, and 1 in Indiana. Without a decision or a statement as to who the dominant or primary agency is, or even who is able to request such status, extensive translations would have to be programmed so that the 211 calls are properly routed. Current technology requires that any abbreviated dialing code be translated into a standard seven-digit number in the central office switches. In each central office, a translation must be programmed to make the incoming call using the abbreviated dialing code ring through to the corresponding seven-digit number. Such a translation program is utilized for 911 and would also be needed for 211 calls.

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<sup>3</sup> Application, page 8

CBT anticipates that other LECs have similar administrative and technical concerns with the implementation of a national program for the use of 211, and the Joint Applicants have not addressed such concerns.

**IV. The Joint Applicants Have Failed to Address, and the Commission Must Consider, the Issue of Who Would Pay for Nationwide 211.**

In both Ohio and Kentucky, 211 service is currently provided as part of a trial offering pursuant to a jointly negotiated contract between the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet ("KTC"), Ohio Department of Transportation ("ODOT") and CBT.<sup>4</sup> This contract calls for the payment of an annual fee, a monthly minimum usage fee, and monthly fees to cover the costs associated with the various trunks and setup charges.

The Joint Applicants do not adequately address how to pay for implementing 211 nationwide. The Joint Applicants, at one point, state that they see the development of this service as a "free 24 hour" service.<sup>5</sup> Even if the Commission determines that there is a sufficiently strong public interest for 211, there are costs associated with implementing 211 service and the Commission should specifically address the cost issue and recovery. While cost recovery could take the form of either a tariff or a contract, CBT strongly urges the Commission to examine this issue.

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<sup>4</sup> See Administrative Case No. 343, Public Service Commission of Kentucky, and In the Matter of the Commission Investigation Into the Allegation of Abbreviated Dialing Arrangements, Such as N-1-1, Case No. 93-1799-TP-COI, Opinion and Order (September 4, 1997). The project at issue in the above cases is known as "Advanced Regional Traffic Interactive Management Information System," or "ARTIMIS," a project that provides "real time" information to motorists seeking information on the status of traffic operations. In the above cases, CBT contended that the use of a standard seven-digit dialing code, such as 333-3333 (or 222-2222) would serve the same purpose of having a number that is easy to remember and would not consume one of the scarce abbreviated dialing codes.

<sup>5</sup> Petitioners' Request, at page 2.

## V. CONCLUSION.

CBT fully recognizes the proposition that a statewide 211 system may be of some benefit to the general public, however, given that the number of N11 abbreviated dialing codes is finite, CBT is not convinced that the Joint Applicants have adequately addressed the administrative and technical difficulties posed for the provisioning of a statewide 211 service. In addition, the Joint Applicants have not adequately addressed the fundamental issue of cost and cost recovery of the service. CBT therefore, requests that the Commission seek a more full explanation of these issues from the Joint Applicants.

Respectfully submitted,



Donald I. Marshall  
Assistant Vice President  
Regulatory Affairs  
Cincinnati Bell Telephone Company  
201 East Fourth Street  
Room 102-910  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45201  
(513) 397-1289

**Service List**  
**Case No. 93-1799-TP-COI**

Ameritech Ohio  
Jon F. Kelly  
Legal Department  
150 E. Gay Street, Rm. 4-C  
Columbus, OH 43215

Michael T. Mulcahy  
Attorney at Law  
Ohio Bell Telephone Company  
45 Erieview Plaza, Suite 1400  
Cleveland, OH 41147

Robin P. Charleston, Esq.  
AT&T Legal Department  
AT&T Communications of Ohio, Inc.  
227 W. Monroe Street, 6th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60606

Sheldon A. Taft  
Vorys, Sater Seymour and Pease  
P.O. Box 1008  
Columbus, OH 43216-1008

William Keating  
State General Counsel  
GTE North, Inc.  
100 Executive Drive  
Marion, OH 43302

Michael J. Daugherty  
Manager of Communications  
Knight Ridder, Inc.  
One Herald Plaza  
Miami, FL 33132-1693

Douglas W. Trabaris  
Senior Attorney  
AT&T  
222 W. Adams Street, Suite 1500  
Chicago, IL 60606

Judith B. Sanders  
Bell, Royer & Sanders Co, L.P.A.  
33 South Grant Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43215-3927

Thomas E. Lodge  
Thompson, Hine and Flory  
One Columbus  
10 West Broad Street, Suite 700  
Columbus, OH 43215-3435

Mary A. Hull  
Sprint Communications Company, L.P.  
8140 Ward Parkway, SE  
Kansas City, MO 64114-2006

Richard P. Rosenberry  
McNees, Wallace & Nurick  
Fifth Third Center, Suite 910  
21 East State Street  
Columbus, OH 43215-4228

Michael C. Arendes, Jr.  
Sprint Communications Company, L.P.  
P.O. Box 3555  
Mansfield, OH 44907

Gordon Proctor  
Director, ODOT  
P.O. Box 899  
Columbus, OH 43216-0899

James C. Codell, III  
Commonwealth of Kentucky  
Transportation Cabinet  
Frankfort, KY 40602

Yvonne T. Ranft  
Attorney at Law  
77 South High St., 15th Fl.  
Columbus, OH 43215

David C. Bergmann  
Attorney At Law  
Office of Consumers Counsel  
77 S. High Street, 15th Fl.  
Columbus, OH 43215

Diane M. Hockman  
Porter, Wright, Morris & Arthur  
41 S. High Street  
Columbus, OH 43215

J. Raymond Prohaska  
Thompson, Hine & Flory  
One Columbus  
10 W. Broad Street  
Columbus, OH 43215



Julianne Lee  
Morrison & Foerster  
2000 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20006-1812

Betsy Korhnak  
Child Care Resource Center  
5350 Oberlin Avenue  
Lorain, OH 44053

Bridget T. McDaniels  
Ohio Heartland Prevention Network  
445 Bowman St.  
P.O. Box 1986  
Mansfield, OH 44901

Connie L. Zimmerman  
Ohio Bureau of Employment Services  
228 S. Main Street  
P.O. Box 151-A  
Bryan, OH 43506-0100

Craig Lindberg  
A.G. Edwards & Sons, Inc.  
41 S. High Street, Gallery  
Columbus, OH 43215-3443

Dan E. Sevda  
Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank  
546 Grant Street  
Akron, OH 44311

Gary L. Cook  
Area Agency on Aging  
1550 Corporate Woods Pky.  
Suite 100  
Uniontown, OH 44685-8797

Herb Helsel  
The Adamshs Board  
Archbold, OH 43502-9537

Janet Smith  
Networks of Southeastern Ohio  
1330 Ashland Avenue,  
P.O. Box 265  
Zanesville, OH 43702-0265

Jean F. Wales  
310 Seneca Trail  
Hartville, OH 44632

Joseph L. Ruby  
Area Agency on Aging  
1550 Corporate Woods Pky, Suite 100  
Uniontown, OH 44685-8797

Kellie J. Amlin  
United Way of Knox County  
8 West Vine Street  
Mt. Vernon, OH 43050

Kendall P. Alexander  
First Call for Help, Inc.  
1330-A N. Scott Street  
Napoleon, OH 43545-1024

Linda Emore  
Child Care Connection  
474 Grant Street  
Akron, OH 44311

Major R. J. Spittler  
Montgomery County Sheriff  
330 W. Second Street, P.O. Box 972  
Dayton, OH 45422-2427

Michelle Rardon  
Mental Health Association  
65 Messimer Drive  
Newark, OH 43055-1881

Representative Jon Peterson  
77 South High Street  
Columbus, OH 43266-0603

Omar Farouq  
Ohio Department of Development  
77 S. High Street  
Columbus, OH 43215

Russell Payne  
Licking County Dept of Human Serv.  
P.O. Box 5030  
74 S. Second Street  
Newark, OH 43085-5030

Sandra Herman  
Family Resource Center  
644 Clinton Street  
Defiance, OH 43512

Sheriff Al Myers  
Delaware County Sheriff's Office  
844 U.S. 42 North  
Delaware, OH 43015

Thomas C. Sawyer  
Member of Congress  
411 Wolf Ledges Pky, Suite 105  
Akron, OH 44311-1051

Tim Davis  
Summit County Executive  
175 S. Main Street, 8th Floor  
Akron, OH 44308-1308

W. D. Thomson  
The Delaware Gazette Co.  
18 E. William St.  
P.O. Box 100  
Delaware, OH 43015

Bob Wentz  
Cincinnati Bell Telephone Company  
201 East Fourth Street, Rm. 910  
Cincinnati, OH 45201-2301