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May 13, 2005

Via Hand Delivery

Ms. Renée J. Jenkins
Chief of Docketing Division
Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
180 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

RECEIVED-DOCKETING DIV
2005 MAY 13 AM 11:41
PUCO

RE: In the Matter of a Proceeding to Implement Lifeline Assistance Modifications as a Result of a
Federal Communications Commission Order
PUCO Case No. 05-461-TP-UNC

Dear Ms. Jenkins:

Enclosed are an original and fifteen (15) copies of tariff revisions to be filed on behalf of The Benton Ridge Telephone Company in the above-referenced matter. The TRF Number for The Benton Ridge Telephone Company is 90-5007-TP-TRF.

Thank you for your assistance. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

Very truly yours,



Carolyn S. Flahive

Enclosure

cc: Jennifer Reed, Specialist

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Carolyn.Flahive@ThompsonHine.com Fax 614.469.3361 Phone 614.469.3294

cw 284234.1

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The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
TELECOMMUNICATIONS APPLICATION FORM

for
Automatic Cases for ILECs Not Subject to Alternative Regulation
(Effective October 14, 2004)

RECEIVED-DOCKETING DIV
2005 MAY 13 AM 11:41
PUBCO

In the Matter of a Proceeding)
To Implement Lifeline Assistance Modifications as a Result) Case No. 05 - 461 - **TP** - UNC
of a Federal Communications Commission Order)

Name of Company The Benton Ridge Telephone Company
Address of Company P.O. Box 180, Benton Ridge, Ohio 45816
Company Web Address _____
Regulatory Contact Person(s) Carolyn S. Flahive Phone (614) 469-3200 Fax (614) 469-3361
Regulatory Contact Person's Email Address Carolyn.Flahive@ThompsonHine.com
Date _____ TRF Docket No. 90 - 5007 - TP-TRF

Motion for protective order included with filing? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Motion for waiver(s) filed affecting this case? ☐ Yes ☒ No [Note: waiver(s) tolls any automatic timeframe]

NOTE: This form must accompany all automatic approval/notice applications filed by incumbent local exchange companies (ILECs) not subject to a qualifying alternative regulation plan when making an application pursuant to Case Nos. 84-944-TP-COI and 86-1144-TP-COI or 89-564-TP-COI.

I. Please indicate the reason for submitting this form (check one)

- ☐ 1 (AEC) Application For Approval Of A Customer Contract For Competitive Services
☐ a. Stand-Alone Contract (90-day approval, 7 copies)
☐ b. Pre-Approved Contract (0-day notice, 7 copies)
- ☐ 2 (ACO) ILEC Application for Change in Ownership Pursuant to 4905.402, Ohio Revised Code (30-day approval, 10 copies)
- ☐ 3 (ALI) Small, For-Profit, ILEC Application For A Limited Increase In Non-Basic Rates (60-day approval, 10 copies)
- ☐ 4 (ATA) Application For Tariff Amendment That Does Not Result In An Increase In Rates
☐ a. Large ILEC, Competitive Offerings Other Than Those Listed Under 5., Below (60-day approval, 7 copies)
☐ b. Small, for-profit ILECs (45-day approval, 10 copies) (Not-for-profit, see item 6, NFP, below)
☐ c. All Others (non-automatic approval)
- ☐ 5 (ZTA) Tariff Notification Not For An Increase In Rates Involving Message Toll, Toll-Free Service, 900 And 900-Like Services, 500 Service, Calling Card, Prepaid Calling Card, Private Line, and Speed Dialing In Accordance With Waiver Granted in 99-563-TP-COI (5/11/2000 and 11/21/2002) (0-day notice, 7 copies)
NOTE: Notifications do not require or imply Commission Approval.
- ☐ 6 (NFP) Small, not-for-profit ILEC tariff amendment
☐ a. Tariff Change Not Resulting In An Increase In Rates (0-day notice, 7 copies)
☐ b. Tariff Application Resulting In An Increase In Non-Basic Rates (45-day notice, 7 copies)
☐ c. Tariff Application Resulting In An Increase In Basic Rates (60-day notice, 10 copies)

THE FOLLOWING ARE TRF FILINGS ONLY, NOT NEW CASES

- ☐ 7 Introduction or Extension of Promotional Offering (10-day notice, 3 copies)
☐ 8 New Price List Rate Within an Approved Rate Range for Existing Competitive Service (0-day notice, 3 copies)

II. The following exhibits corresponding to the list of cases above, at a minimum, are required to be filed:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3, 4, 5, 6	Current Tariff Sheets (to be superseded), if applicable
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3, 4, 5, 6	Proposed Tariff Sheets
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	Rationale or Explanation for Change
<input type="checkbox"/>	1.a., 4.a.	Justification for Competitive Treatment
<input type="checkbox"/>	1.a., 4.a.	Cost support for non-MTS service
<input type="checkbox"/>	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8	Customer Notice to customers affected by proposal, and statement as to the form and timing of the notice
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	Copy of Contract

- III. Applicant is filing this application under the regulatory requirements established by the Commission in Case No. 89-564-TP-COI.
- IV. Applicant respectfully requests the Commission to permit the filing of the proposed tariff sheets, to become effective on the date shown on the proposed tariff sheets (which is a date no earlier than the day after the applicable automatic approval date), modified by any further revisions that have become effective prior to the effective date of the proposed schedule sheets.

Respectfully submitted,

THE BENTON RIDGE TELEPHONE COMPANY

By: Carol S. Flahive
Thomas E. Lodge (0015741)
Carolyn S. Flahive (0072404)
THOMPSON HINE LLP
10 West Broad Street, Suite 700
Columbus, Ohio 43215-3435
614-469-3200

Its Attorneys

VERIFICATION

I verify that all of the information submitted herein, and all additional information submitted in connection with this case, is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Carol S. Flahive 5-11-05
*(Signature and Title) (Date)

*Verification is required for every filing, and need **not** be notarized except for Applications for a Limited Increase in Rates (ALIs). The verification may be signed by an officer of the applicant, its counsel, or an authorized agent of the applicant, except for ALIs. ALI applications must be signed by an officer of the company and be notarized.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this ____ day of _____, 2005

Notary Public, State of Ohio
My commission expires _____.

EXHIBIT A
(Current Tariff Sheets)

P.U.C.O. NO. 7
BASIC TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE

II. LINK UP

A. General

Link Up is a federal assistance program that provides eligible residential customers with the following benefits:

- A reduction of the Telephone Company's applicable service connection charges equal to one-half of such service connection charges, or \$30.00, whichever is less.
- A deferred payment plan for service connection charges, for which the customer does not pay interest, where such service connection charges do not exceed \$200.00 and the payment plan does not exceed 12 months duration. (Service Connection charges do not include the Telephone Company's applicable security deposit requirements.)

B. Regulations

1. Link Up Assistance is available to residential customers who are currently participating in one of the following assistance programs:
 - (a) Medical Assistance under Chapter 5111 of the Ohio Revised Code (Medicaid);
 - (b) Food Stamps;
 - (c) Supplemental Security Income (SSI) under Title XVI of the Social Security Act;
 - (d) Federal Public Housing Assistance or Section 8; or
 - (e) Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP).

Issued: July 21, 2004

Effective: September 7, 2004

In Accordance with Case No. 04-1147-TP-ATA
Issued by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
Kim Stumpp, General Manager Telephone/Internet Operations
Benton Ridge, Ohio

P.U.C.O. NO. 7
BASIC TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE

II. LINK UP (con't)

B. Regulations (con't)

2. A customer eligible for Link Up may choose one or both of the Link Up benefits identified in Section II.A., above.
3. The Telephone Company shall require, as proof of eligibility for Link Up Assistance, a document signed by the customer, certifying under penalty of perjury that the customer is receiving benefits from one of the programs identified in Section II.B.1., above; identifying the specific program or programs from which the customer receives benefits, and agreeing to notify the carrier if the customer ceases to participate in such program or programs. If a customer is simultaneously applying for both Link Up and Lifeline, such customer may utilize the same document to verify eligibility for both programs.
4. The Telephone Company's Link Up program shall allow a qualifying low-income consumer to receive the benefit of the Link Up program for a second or subsequent time only for a principal place of residence with an address different from the residence address at which the Link Up assistance was provided previously.
5. Link Up customers are not restricted on the optional services to which they may subscribe.

Issued: July 21, 2004

Effective: September 7, 2004

In Accordance with Case No. 04-1147-TP-ATA
Issued by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
Kim Stumpp, General Manager Telephone/Internet Operations
Benton Ridge, Ohio

P.U.C.O. NO. 7
BASIC TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE

III. LIFELINE ASSISTANCE

A. General

Lifeline Assistance is a federal support program that provides eligible customers with the following benefits:

- o A waiver of the Federal Subscriber Line Charge.
- o A reduction of \$1.75 off the customer's monthly basic local service charges.
- o Free toll limitation services (e.g., toll blocking, toll control).
- o A waiver of the Telephone Company's service deposit requirement, if the customer elects to receive toll blocking.

B. Regulations

1. Lifeline Assistance is available to residential customers who are currently participating in one of the following assistance programs:
 - (a) Medical Assistance under Chapter 5111 of the Ohio Revised Code (Medicaid);
 - (b) Food Stamps;
 - (c) Supplemental Security Income (SSI) under Title XVI of the Social Security Act;
 - (d) Federal Public Housing Assistance, or Section 8; or
 - (e) Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP).

P.U.C.O. NO. 7
BASIC TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE

III. LIFELINE ASSISTANCE (con't)

B. Regulations (con't)

2. The Telephone Company shall require, as proof of eligibility for Lifeline Assistance, a document signed by the customer, certifying under penalty of perjury that the customer is receiving benefits from one of the programs identified in Section III.B.1., above; identifying the specific program or programs from which the customer receives benefits, and agreeing to notify the carrier if the customer ceases to participate in such program or programs. If a customer is simultaneously applying for both Lifeline and Link Up, such customer may utilize the same document to verify eligibility for both programs.
3. At no time shall a customer's Lifeline rate go below zero.

EXHIBIT B
(Proposed Tariff Sheets)

P.U.C.O. NO. 7
BASIC TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE

II. LINK UP

A. General

Link Up is a federal assistance program that provides eligible residential customers with the following benefits:

- o A reduction of the Telephone Company's applicable service connection charges equal to one-half of such service connection charges, or \$30.00, whichever is less.
- o A deferred payment plan for service connection charges, for which the customer does not pay interest, where such service connection charges do not exceed \$200.00 and the payment plan does not exceed 12 months duration. (Service Connection charges do not include the Telephone Company's applicable security deposit requirements.)

B. Regulations

1. Link Up Assistance is available to residential customers who are currently participating in one of the following assistance programs:
 - (a) Medical Assistance under Chapter 5111 of the Ohio Revised Code (Medicaid);
 - (b) Food Stamps;
 - (c) Supplemental Security Income (SSI) under Title XVI of the Social Security Act;
 - (d) Federal Public Housing Assistance or Section 8;
 - (e) Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP);
 - (f) National School Lunch Program's Free Lunch Program (NSL); (N)
 - (g) Household income at or below 135% of the poverty level; or (N)
 - (h) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). (N)

ISSUED: May 13, 2005

EFFECTIVE: June 13, 2005

In Accordance With Case No. 05-461-TP-UNC
Issued by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
Kim Stumpp, General Manager Telephone/Internet Operations
Benton Ridge, Ohio

P.U.C.O. NO. 7
BASIC TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE

II. LINK UP (con't)

B. Regulations (con't)

2. A customer eligible for Link Up may choose one or both of the Link Up benefits identified in Section II.A., above.
3. The Telephone Company shall require, as proof of eligibility for Link Up Assistance, a document signed by the customer, certifying under penalty of perjury that the customer is receiving benefits from one of the programs identified in Section II.B.1., above; identifying the specific program or programs from which the customer receives benefits, and agreeing to notify the carrier if the customer ceases to participate in such program or programs. If a customer is applying for both Link Up and Lifeline, such customer may utilize the same document to verify eligibility for both programs. If the customer is applying for Link-Up based on income Section II.B.1.g., examples of income documentation would be 1) the prior year's state or federal income tax return; 2) a current income statement from an employer or W-2; 3) three consecutive months worth of the most current pay stubs; 4) the most recent Social Security statement of benefits; 5) the most recent Veteran's Administration statement of benefits; 6) the most recent retirement/pension statement of benefits; 7) the most recent Unemployment/Workmen's Compensation statement of benefits; 8) a divorce decree or child support document. (N)
4. The Telephone Company's Link Up program shall allow a qualifying low-income consumer to receive the benefit of the Link Up program for a second or subsequent time only for a principal place of residence with an address different from the residence address at which the Link Up assistance was provided previously.
5. Link Up customers are not restricted on the optional services to which they may subscribe.
6. If a customer disagrees with a company's findings regarding eligibility for Link-Up, the customer may file an informal/formal complaint with the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio. (N)

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BASIC TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE

III. LIFELINE ASSISTANCE

A. General

Lifeline Assistance is a federal support program that provides eligible customers with the following benefits:

- o A waiver of the Federal Subscriber Line Charge.
- o A reduction of \$1.75 off the customer's monthly basic local service charges.
- o Free toll limitation services (e.g., toll blocking, toll control).
- o A waiver of the Telephone Company's service deposit requirement, if the customer elects to receive toll blocking.
- o Optional service like Caller ID and Call Waiting are not restricted. (N)

B. Regulations

1. Lifeline Assistance is available to residential customers who are currently participating in one of the following assistance programs:
 - (a) Medical Assistance under Chapter 5111 of the Ohio Revised Code (Medicaid);
 - (b) Food Stamps;
 - (c) Supplemental Security Income (SSI) under Title XVI of the Social Security Act;
 - (d) Federal Public Housing Assistance, or Section 8;
 - (e) Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP);
 - (f) National School Lunch Free Lunch Program; (N)
 - (g) Household income at or below 135% of the poverty level; (N)
 - (h) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). (N)

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P.U.C.O. NO. 7
BASIC TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE

III. LIFELINE ASSISTANCE (con't)

B. Regulations (con't)

2. Consumers participating in this program may receive service connection and deposit waivers through Link-Up. (N)
3. The Telephone Company shall require, as proof of eligibility for Lifeline Assistance, a document signed by the customer, certifying under penalty of perjury that the customer is receiving benefits from one of the programs identified in Section III.B.1., above; identifying the specific program or programs from which the customer receives benefits, and agreeing to notify the carrier if the customer ceases to participate in such program or programs. If a customer is applying for both Lifeline and Link Up, such customer may utilize the same document to verify eligibility for both programs. If the customer is applying for Lifeline based on income Section III.B.1.g., examples of income documentation would be 1) the prior year's state or federal income tax return; 2) a current income statement from an employer or W-2; 3) three consecutive months worth of the most current pay stubs; 4) the most recent Social Security statement of benefits; 5) the most recent Veteran's Administration statement of benefits; 6) the most recent retirement/pension statement of benefits; 7) the most recent Unemployment/Workmen's Compensation statement of benefits; 8) a divorce decree or child support document. (N)
4. At no time will the monthly basic local exchange service charge less the discount cause the local service rates to be less than zero. (T)
5. The Telephone Company shall perform a verification audit of a customer receiving Lifeline Assistance. (N)
6. The Lifeline discounts and waivers apply to only one access line per household. (N)

ISSUED: May 13, 2005

EFFECTIVE: June 13, 2005

In Accordance With Case No. 05-461-TP-UNC
Issued by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
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Benton Ridge, Ohio

P.U.C.O. NO. 7
BASIC TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE

III. LIFELINE ASSISTANCE (Con't)

C. Enrollment Process

(N)

1. Existing Customers

- (a) Customers with dial tone wanting to establish lifeline service should complete and submit a Company lifeline application, and provide documentation if applicable, within 30 days of requesting the discount.
- (b) The Company will review the customer's lifeline application to determine customer's eligibility within 30 days.
- (c) If the customer is eligible for the lifeline discount, the Company will credit the customer's bill retroactive to the date of customer's request for lifeline service as long as the customer timely submits the application and any required documentation.
- (d) If the customer is not eligible for lifeline or does not submit timely documentation, the Company will send out a letter.

2. New Customers

- (a) Customers applying for new service and requesting to establish lifeline service should complete and submit a Company lifeline application, and provide documentation if applicable, within 30 days of requesting the discount. The Company will process the lifeline application without delaying the installation of new service.
- (b) The Company will review the customer's lifeline application to determine the customer's eligibility within 30 days.
- (c) If the customer is eligible for the lifeline discount, the Company will credit the customer's bill for installation charges and the monthly discount retroactive to the date the customer's service is established as long as the customer timely submits the application and any required documentation.
- (d) If the customer is not eligible for lifeline or does not submit timely documentation, the Company will send out a letter.

(N)

ISSUED: May 13, 2005

EFFECTIVE: June 13, 2005

In Accordance With Case No. 05-461-TP-UNC
Issued by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
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Benton Ridge, Ohio

P.U.C.O. NO. 7
BASIC TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE

III. LIFELINE ASSISTANCE (Con't)

D. Income Eligibility

(N)

1. The Telephone Company must verify through acceptable documentation that a customer qualifies for Lifeline Assistance. Such verification must be performed within 60 days of a customer's service establishment. Examples of documentation would include 1) the prior year's state or federal income tax return; 2) a current income statement from an employer or W-2; 3) three consecutive months worth of the most current pay stubs; 4) the most recent Social Security statement of benefits; (5) the most recent Veteran's Administration statement of benefits; 6) the most recent retirement/pension statement of benefits; 7) the most recent Unemployment/ Workmen's Compensation statement of benefits; 8) a divorce decree or child support document.
2. Regardless of when the Company completes the verification process lifeline benefits shall go back to the date the qualified customer established lifeline service.
3. The Telephone Company shall provide written notification to customers that do not qualify for Lifeline Assistance. The notice shall give the customer an additional 30 day opportunity to prove eligibility or dispute the Company's determination.
4. The Telephone Company shall give customers the option of spreading installation charges over three months consistent with Chapter 4901:1-5, O.A.C.
5. Written notification must include 1) the earliest date termination of lifeline benefits will occur if the customer has been receiving the benefits or the last date the customer has to provide documentation to prove eligibility to receive the benefits; 2) the reason(s) for termination of lifeline benefits and any actions which the customer must take to demonstrate continued eligibility; 3) contact information for the Telephone Company; and 4) a statement consistent with the disconnect notice set forth in Chapter 4901:1-5, O.A.C., explaining who customers may contact in the event of a dispute.
6. If a customer disagrees with the Company's findings regarding eligibility for lifeline, the customer may file an informal/formal complaint with the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio.

(N)

ISSUED: May 13, 2005

EFFECTIVE: June 13, 2005

In Accordance With Case No. 05-461-TP-UNC
Issued by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
Kim Stumpp, General Manager Telephone/Internet Operations
Benton Ridge, Ohio

P.U.C.O. NO. 7
BASIC TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE

III. LIFELINE ASSISTANCE (Con't)

E. Verification for Continued Eligibility

(N)

1. The Telephone Company must notify customers at least 60 days prior to the Company's pending termination of the customer's Lifeline Assistance if the customer fails to submit acceptable documentation for continued eligibility for benefits. Such notice will be separate from the bill and will include: 1) the earliest date termination of lifeline benefits would occur; 2) the reason(s) for the termination of lifeline benefits and any actions which the customer must take to demonstrate continued eligibility; 3) contact information for the Telephone Company and 4) a statement consistent with the disconnect notice requirements outlined in the MTSS Chapter 4901:1-5, O.A.C., explaining who the customer should contact in the event of a dispute.
2. Should a customer fail to submit proper documentation within the 60 day period, the Telephone Company will terminate the customer's lifeline benefits and require the customer to re-apply.
3. If a customer disagrees with the Company's findings regarding eligibility for Lifeline Assistance, the customer may file an informal/formal complaint with the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio.

(N)

ISSUED: May 13, 2005

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In Accordance With Case No. 05-461-TP-UNC
Issued by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
Kim Stumpp, General Manager Telephone/Internet Operations
Benton Ridge, Ohio

EXHIBIT C

The Applicant hereby revises its tariff pursuant to the Commission's Entry in Case No. 05-461-TP-UNC. The Applicant intends to use the Commission's boilerplate notices.