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John Bemis
Public Policy Director Montana
Regulatory and Legislative Affairs

April 4, 2016

Montana Public Service Commission
Will Rosquist
1701 Prospect Avenue
PO Box 202601
Helena, MT 59620-2601

RE: CenturyLink QC Digital Subscriber Line Availability Expansion and Plant Rehabilitation
Docket N2014.4.38 Order 7388j

First Quarterly Status Report

Dear Mr. Rosquist,

In Order No 7388j in Docket N2014.4.38 Qwest Corporation d/b/a CenturyLink QC is filing the First quarterly status report.

In accordance with the Montana Public Service Commission decision dated August 25, 2015 to CenturyLink we are filing our quarterly update with thePSC regarding the status of Cascade, Wolf Creed and Wibaux deployment of DSL.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Bemis".

cc: Montana Consumer Counsel

CenturyLink QC Docket N2014.4.38
Order 7388j, Digital Subscriber Line Availability Expansion and Plant Rehabilitation
First Quarterly Status Report

April 1, 2016

Introduction

Per the Commission's decision on August 25, 2015 in its Order 7338j, Qwest Corporation d/b/a CenturyLink QC ("CenturyLink QC") is filing this first quarterly report as prescribed in the associated Joint Stipulation and Settlement Agreement. A plan addressing customers in Cascade, Wolf Creek and Wibaux was shared with members of the Montana Public Service Commission (Commission or PSC) in December 2015 and with its Staff in November 2015. This report outlines what was accomplished during the first quarter of 2016.

Cascade/Missouri River Corridor

The Joint Stipulation and Settlement Agreement stated:

"CenturyLink will deploy 10/1 broadband capability to approximately 437 locations, comprised of approximately 293 locations within its Cascade wire center in Census Blocks subject to the FCC's offer of model-based CAF II funding and approximately 144 locations in the Cascade wire center that are not subject to the FCC's offer of model-based CAF II funding. The geographic areas where CenturyLink QC will deploy broadband in the Cascade wire center are shown in Appendix A to this Stipulation and Settlement Agreement. CenturyLink will make every effort to complete the Cascade broadband deployment within 15 months of the date of approval of this settlement, but the deployment shall be completed no later than 24 months from the approval of this settlement. CenturyLink will file detailed plans and a timeline for the Cascade deployment within 3 months of the elate of the approval of this settlement and will provide quarterly progress reports to the Commission until the completion of the deployment."

During the first quarter of 2016, CenturyLink QC completed 100% of network planning for the Cascade Project, and 70% of the field engineering. The onset of construction is expected during the second quarter of this project, presuming the necessary permits and easements are secured. This aspect of the effort is the least predictable. Permits and easements involve both public and private property. The legal procedure necessary to secure these permits and easements is in progress now.

Wolf Creek(Craig) and Wibaux Plant Rehabilitation

The Joint Stipulation and Settlement Agreement stated:

“Taking into account both the low density and relatively higher trouble report rate, as well as the extensive facilities-based competition available to many customers within the Wolf Creek and Wibaux wire centers, within 120 days after the date the Commission issues an order approving this Agreement, CenturyLink QC will complete an analysis to determine the most problematic, recurring areas of trouble in the network serving its current customers. Based on that analysis, CenturyLink QC will identify reasonable corrective action and implement a service improvement plan in the Wolf Creek and Wibaux wire center with the goal of reducing the trouble report rate. This plan may include but is not limited to: replacing defective equipment including repeaters, pedestals, and terminals, grounding and bonding, cable rehab and/or replacement and rehab or replacement of carrier systems.

CenturyLink QC will provide its Wolf Creek and Wibaux service improvement plan to the Commission prior to implementation and will provide quarterly reports thereafter on the progress of the plan until the corrective actions are completed. CenturyLink QC will make every reasonable effort to complete implementation of the service improvement plan within 15 months after the Commission approves this Agreement, but in no event longer than 24 months.”

In December 2015 the PSC was presented the plan which included the results of an analysis to determine the most problematic areas of trouble. Based on that analysis, CenturyLink QC identified specific cable counts and corrective action with the goal of reducing the trouble report rate. This plan included, but was not limited to replacement of defective equipment including repeaters, pedestals, and terminals, grounding/bonding, and cable rehabilitation and/or replacement as well as rehabilitation or replacement of loop carrier system electronics. The plan presented in December 2015 anticipated that this work would begin during the second quarter of 2016. That continues to be the objective of CenturyLink QC.

Summary

Plans presented to the PSC in December 2015 motivated by PSC Order 7338j and the associated Joint Stipulation and Settlement Agreement are proceeding on pace with objectives. Cascade/Missouri River Corridor network planning is complete and engineering is 85% complete. Construction bids have been released. Construction permits, easement agreements, and rights-of-way processing are the current focus and challenge. Plant rehabilitation at Wolf Creek(Craig) and Wibaux has been specified, and hands-on effort of skilled craftspersons will begin during the second quarter as planned.