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NATIONAL UTILITY REGULATION PUBLICATION FEATURES ARTICLES

BY MONTANA PSC MEMBER & STAFF

The National Regulatory Research Institute's Spring 1999 Quarterly Bulletin features four articles by Montana Public Service Commissioner Bob Rowe and one article co-authored by PSC economists Mike Lee and Will Rosquist.

The NRRI is the official research arm of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC). It is based at Ohio State University.

Rowe, who chairs NARUC's Telecommunications Committee, contributed the following articles to the Spring NRRI publication:

- "Telecommunications Committee Works in the Present While Anticipating the Future," which introduced a project to consider alternative long-term telecommunications policies.
- " 'Best Practices' in Implementation of the Telecommunications Act," co-authored with Vivian Witkind-Davis of the NRRI, which summarized a report on various strategies to implement the 1996 federal Telecommunications Act, including local competition, universal service, and consumer protection. NRRI also published the full Best Practices document as a stand-alone report.
- "Summary of November 1998, Universal Service Joint Board Recommendation and Issues of Concern to High-Cost States," which outlined issues affecting rural states such as Montana, and suggested a strategy for promoting both universal service to rural areas and local telephone competition.
- "Let's Work Together to Resolve Bell Operating Company Long Distance Entry." Rowe proposed multi-state cooperation on key elements of the Telecommunications Act's "competitive checklist" for allowing Bell Operating Companies to provide in-region long-distance service in exchange for opening up their networks to local competition. The states served by U S WEST are now pursuing this proposal.

This month, Rowe also had a chapter published in an American Enterprise Institute book, Is the Telecommunications Act of 1996 Broken? If So, How Can We Fix It? Rowe's chapter, "Foxes, Hedgehogs and Federalism: States Implement the Telecommunications Act," suggested "cooperative federalist" approaches to national telecommunications policy. Since Rowe first wrote the article last year several of the proposals have been implemented.

Lee's and Rosquist's contribution to the NRRI Bulletin was an article titled "Regulatory Stewardship: A Note on Pricing and Service Quality with Application to U S West." The article discusses opportunities to integrate multiple telecommunications issues such as subsidies, competition and proper pricing reflecting the noticeably lower service quality being provided to residential customers compared to business customers.

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