



California Public Utilities Commission

505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PUC AWARDS GRANT FUNDS TO BRING TELEPHONE SERVICE TO RURAL COMMUNITIES CURRENTLY UNSERVED

SAN FRANCISCO, June 9, 2004 – The California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) today approved funding for the following rural locations to assist in providing telecommunications services to these areas that are currently without telephone service:

- Wireline telecommunications service to the Yurok Tribe in Humboldt County in the amount of \$2,500,000;
- Combination of wireless and wireline infrastructure to the community of Iowa Hill in Placer County in the amount of \$1,834,900;
- Wireless infrastructure throughout Trinity County in the amount of \$2,500,000.

These funds are derived from the California High Cost Fund A for the Rural Telecommunications Infrastructure Grant Program.

California Assembly Bill 140 created the Rural Telecommunications Infrastructure Grant Program. The first of its kind in the nation, the program provides grants of up to \$2.5 million per project, with total grant funding of \$10 million per year, for construction of telecommunications infrastructure to low-income, rural communities currently without telephone service. The legislation required the PUC to develop eligibility criteria for community-based groups to apply for grants and establish a government-industry working group to develop technical criteria for use in evaluating grant applications.

The Yurok Indian Reservation is located in Humboldt County in Northern California, approximately sixty miles from the Oregon border. It is mountainous, heavily forested, with limited roadway access, and has been called one of the most remote areas in California. Only approximately seven miles of the total 52 miles of reservation have telephone services of any kind. The tribe's proposal is to build approximately 20 miles of telecommunication main line extension, installing

main fiber optic and multi-pair lines concurrently with an electrification project. Installing both systems at the same time allows for cost savings by utilizing joint trenching. Telephone branch lines and individual service drops to approximately 100 homes will be installed. Two schools, including a Head Start school, a Bureau of Land Management field office, a fire station, two churches, and three community water stations also will be served with telephone service for the first time in history.

The community of Iowa Hill is located in rural Placer County; the area is east of Colfax and north of Foresthill. It is a low-income community of about 50 families struggling without phone service and holds the distinction of having the only U.S. Post Office in the state without telephone service. Iowa Hill's proposal is to build a combination Wireless Transport Link and Wireline Distribution Infrastructure project. The wireless transport system, consisting of two towers and associated equipment, will connect from the town of Colfax to Iowa Hill. From the Iowa Hill tower site, the distribution facilities will include buried copper cable to all known potential subscribers of the Iowa Hill Community.

Trinity County is one of California's and the nation's most rural counties, defined as a Frontier County with less than four people per square mile. Steep forested mountains and canyons characterize it, with six major rivers coursing through steep canyons. It is separated from the state of Oregon by Siskiyou County on the north and separated from the Pacific Ocean by Humboldt County on the west. Because of the unique geography of Trinity County, 25 percent of the residents are without basic phone infrastructure and service. Due to the prohibitive cost estimates of providing wireline services, wireless phone service is the only viable way to serve these residents, as well as visitors and emergency service providers.

Trinity County is proposing to construct 10 cell sites that will provide coverage for most of the communities and roads throughout the County. The County proposes to partner with the local cellular provider, Cal-One Cellular L.P., to construct the project. Cal-One will finalize the cell tower network and get all required permits. The County will bid, build, and own the facilities, leasing the tower sites to Cal-One and up to two other cellular providers.

For more information on the PUC, please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov.

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