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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PSC FINES LONG DISTANCE CARRIER \$9,300 FOR FAILURE
TO FILE UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND AUDIT REPORT**

LINCOLN – A Montana-based long distance telecommunications carrier was fined \$9,300 Tuesday by the Nebraska Public Service Commission for filing an audit of its payments to the Nebraska Universal Service Fund more than five months late.

Touch America, headquartered in Butte, Montana, was fined after missing a deadline for the audit report. The deadline had been extended several times by the Nebraska Commission. The report is required of all telecommunications carriers generating more than \$1 million in annual revenues in Nebraska. The final deadline with extensions was October 30, 2002, the audit subsequently was filed April 9, 2003.

First District Commissioner Frank Landis of Lincoln said, “This is a case of an absolute lack of willingness to cooperate even minimally with the state’s requirement.”

Touch America bought the Nebraska long distance accounts of Qwest in 2000. At the time, Qwest, because of its purchase of US West, was temporarily barred from offering long distance services in states where Qwest was a local exchange provider.

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