

May 16, 2003

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PSC SMALL BUSINESS ALERT: COMPLAINTS ALLEGE BILLINGS
FOR UNACCEPTED COLLECT CALLS**

LINCOLN – The Nebraska Public Service Commission today issued an alert to small businesses regarding complaints that have been arriving at the Commission regarding collect calls that were not accepted.

About 20 complaints were received in two days from small businesses throughout Nebraska claiming they had been billed \$28.84 for a three-minute collect telemarketing call that they never accepted. According to the businesses making the complaints, the telemarketing collect calls from a New Mexico firm were near the end of last year, but the bills are dated May 1 from a Florida firm called “00” Operator. Attempts by the Public Service Commission to reach the Florida company have been unsuccessful.

All of the calls billed identify the same originating New Mexico telephone number, the Public Service Commission said. The billing is independent from the small businesses’ monthly bills from their local telephone companies. Among the communities represented in the complaints received in the first two days are Omaha, Lincoln, Scottsbluff, Norfolk, Kearney and Shelby.

A random check by the Nebraska Public Service Commission indicates that the alleged concerns with “00” Operator are being called to the attention of state regulators in other areas across the nation. Businesses and individuals believing they have been billed erroneously are encouraged to keep their bill, but not pay it. They should also contact the Nebraska Public Service Commission at 402-471-3101 or toll-free at 1-800-526-0017.

The Commission is also discussing this matter with the Nebraska Attorney General, Jon
Bruning.

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