

August 9, 2004

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**OBJECTIONS TO HAMILTON TELECOM RATE INCREASE
FAIL TO REACH FIVE PERCENT THRESHOLD**

LINCOLN – Hamilton Telephone will be able to implement its proposed rate increase to \$13.75 monthly for both residential and business subscribers.

The company notified its customers of the proposed increase on April 19 and individuals wishing to object had until July 30, 2004 to protest the increase to the Nebraska Public Service Commission. The Commission was told by staff at its August 3 meeting that the number of protests failed to reach a threshold of five percent of the total number of Hamilton subscribers, which would have triggered Commission review. The Commission received 145 protests but needed 222 to reach the five percent mark.

“While this is a significant number of protests, it fails to reach the level of five percent of the total customers that is required by state law before the Commission may become involved,” Fourth District PSC Commissioner Rod Johnson of Sutton said. Johnson’s Commission district includes the area served by Hamilton. “Had the five percent threshold been reached, the next step would have been a public hearing before the Commission.”

Hamilton conducted public meetings on its rate proposal in Marquette on May 25, Aurora on May 26 and Doniphan on May 27. The former rate was \$10.75 monthly for residential and business customers.

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