

October 1, 2004

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW CAPTIONED TELEPHONE SERVICE BEGINS IN OCTOBER

LINCOLN – A captioned telephone service is scheduled to begin October 1 for users of the Nebraska Relay Service.

In an addendum to its contract with Hamilton Telephone of Aurora to operate the relay system for individuals with speech and hearing impairments, the Nebraska Public Service Commission authorized the use of CapTel, which translates spoken words into text for persons who have specialized equipment.

Trained operators repeat what the hearing user says into voice-recognition equipment, which then converts the words to text messages that can be read on the CapTel telephone screen.

Individuals with hearing impairments may receive financial help for the purchase of the CapTel equipment from the Nebraska Equipment Distribution Program, which also is administered by the Public Service Commission. Applications for equipment are available on the Commission's website.

CapTel users will dial the number of the called party just as any other user. Non-CapTel users who wish to call a CapTel user must first dial 1-877-243-2823. All relay services in Nebraska are funded through a seven-cent monthly surcharge on all telephone bills.

In June, the last month of the most recent fiscal year, the Nebraska Relay Service handled 25,174 outbound calls averaging 3.89 minutes each.

Hamilton Telecommunications operates relay services in eight other states and the District of Columbia in addition to Nebraska.

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