

April 30, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PSC RELEASES VOUCHERS FOR RELAY SERVICE EQUIPMENT PURCHASES

LINCOLN – The first of some 300 vouchers for the purchase of relay service equipment for Nebraskans with speech and hearing disabilities are being issued this week by the Nebraska Public Service Commission.

The 300 vouchers represent requests for equipment filed with the Commission from mid-December through April. These requests were held up because the Commission had reached the limit on the amount that can be spent under state law. The Legislature authorized additional spending for the voucher program in LB661 this session. That portion of LB661 contained the emergency clause and became law when Governor Dave Heineman signed it in April.

The vouchers, which average \$400 apiece, total about \$120,000. The monies come from the five cents per month that all Nebraska telephone users pay as part of their monthly bill to fund the Nebraska Relay System.

Commissioner Jerry Vap of McCook, who sits on the Commission's Relay Advisory Committee, said the use of the funds will not jeopardize the relay system, which is operated by Hamilton Communications of Aurora.

Vap said the Nebraska Specialized Equipment Telecommunications Equipment Program largely provides recipients with amplified telephone signaling devices that alert call recipients through visual, loud rings, or personal signals such as vibrations.

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