

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
UTILITIES COMMISSION
RALEIGH

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News Release

October 18, 2001

P-100, Sub 137B

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**NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION DEFERS
IMPLEMENTATION OF MANDATORY TEN-DIGIT DIALING
IN THE 919 AREA CODE**

The North Carolina Utilities Commission (NCUC) today deferred indefinitely the implementation of mandatory ten-digit dialing in the 919 area code service territory, thereby allowing consumers to continue 7-digit local dialing in the 919 code until further notice. Due to the success of number conservation measures ordered by the NCUC and implemented by the telecommunications industry, the expected life of area code 919 has been extended from February 6, 2002, until at least the fourth quarter of 2003. This announcement also defers the use of the new 984 area code, which had been previously announced as an "overlay" area code for the existing 919 code service area (which is referred to officially as a Numbering Plan Area, or NPA).

The Commission attempted to prolong the life of 919 by extensive use of newly available conservation measures, specifically the reclamation of unused central office numbers assigned to service providers and the implementation of thousands-block number pooling. These efforts have borne fruit.

According to sources at Neustar, Inc., the North American Numbering Plan Administrator, deferring the implementation of the 984 "overlay" NPA is made possible due to a variety of factors, including the fact that telecommunications service providers have curtailed their demand for numbers. Additionally, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of returned or "reclaimed" central office codes from industry service providers. Most significantly, the NCUC anticipates substantial benefits from the thousands-block pooling program, which is being implemented in the 919 NPA this month. The industry and NCUC will monitor closely the effectiveness of number pooling and other conservation measures, to insure adequate time is given prior to implementing an "overlay" code and mandatory ten-digit dialing, whenever such relief is actually required.

An overlay would have required dialing 10 digits for every local call. Though this dialing protocol would not affect the cost of local calls, ". . . it is obviously an inconvenience that we wish to avoid for as long as possible," says North Carolina Utilities Commission Chair Jo Anne Sanford.

"It is unfortunate that these conservation tools, specifically number pooling, were not available to us when area code 704 exhausted," said Sanford. "However, we will aggressively pursue these and all other mechanisms that become available to us in our campaign to conserve numbers."

For more detailed information about area code overlays and area code relief in general, or to see the text of the Commission's Order, you may visit the Commission's website at www.ncuc.commerce.state.nc.us.