

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
UTILITIES COMMISSION
RALEIGH**

NEWS RELEASE

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ORANGE COUNTY TO VOTE ON TOLL-FREE CALLING

Reversing an earlier decision, the North Carolina Utilities Commission (NCUC) yesterday voted to give Orange County subscribers an opportunity to vote on whether they wish to have toll-free, flat-rate extended area service (EAS) in their County.

Under the terms of the Order, subscribers in Mebane Home Telephone's Mebane exchange, including those located in Alamance County, and subscribers in Central Telephone Company's Hillsborough exchange will be voting on whether they wish to have EAS to each other and Chapel Hill. The EAS additive for Mebane will be \$3.19 per month for residential subscribers and \$8.08 per month for business subscribers, while the Hillsborough additive will be \$2.67 for residential subscribers and \$6.09 for business subscribers.

Because the Chapel Hill additive is very low (\$0.06 for residential and \$0.13 for business), Chapel Hill subscribers will not be voting in the poll. Instead, if the Hillsborough and Mebane votes are positive, Chapel Hill subscribers will receive a notice of the Chapel Hill rate increase and be given an opportunity to protest.

The Orange County EAS proposal was the result of intensive negotiations between Mebane Home Telephone Company and Orange County and represented a modification of the original EAS proposal presented to the NCUC.