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December 29, 2003

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Public Utility Commission of Texas  
Attention: Filing Clerk  
1701 North Congress Avenue  
Austin, TX 78701

**Re: Consolidated Workforce Diversity Report on behalf of Birch Telecom of Texas Ltd., L.L.P. and Ionex Communications South, Inc., Docket No. 28691**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Enclosed are four copies of Consolidated Workforce Diversity Report on behalf of Birch Telecom of Texas Ltd., L.L.P. and Ionex Communications South, Inc. for the period October 1, 2002, through September 30, 2003, which is being filed pursuant to Substantive Rule §26.85.

If there are any questions or concerns regarding this report, please contact the undersigned.

Thank you.

Yours very truly,

Barbara P. Fillinger  
Sr. Manager, Regulatory Compliance

**Enclosures**

cc: Hon. Rick Perry, Governor  
Hon. David Dewhurst, Lieutenant Governor  
Hon. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa, Chair, TX Senate Hispanic Caucus  
Hon. Tom Craddick, Speaker of the House  
Hon. Joe Deshotel, Chair, House African-American Caucus  
Hon. Pete Gallego, Chair, House Mexican-American Legislative Caucus

**CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT ON  
FIVE-YEAR PLAN TO ENHANCE WORKFORCE DIVERSITY**

**Filed Pursuant to Substantive Rule §26.85**

**For the Period October 1, 2002, through September 30, 2003**

**On Behalf of**

**BIRCH TELECOM OF TEXAS LTD., L.L.P.  
and  
IONEX COMMUNICATIONS SOUTH, INC.**

## WORKFORCE DIVERSITY FORM

Occupational Categories	NUMBER OF TEXAS FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES FOR REPORTING YEAR <sup>1</sup>												
	Combined Total	Company Totals		Caucasian		African American		Hispanic		Asian		American Indian	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Officials and Managers	76	53	23	45	21	2	6	2	1	0	1	0	0
Professionals	49	30	19	25	12	4	3	1	2	1	1	0	0
Technicians	57	54	3	36	3	0	6	0	11	0	1	0	0
Sales Workers	264	183	81	130	63	21	5	26	11	6	2	0	0
Office and Clerical	83	20	63	10	43	4	17	3	3	3	0	0	0
Craft Workers (Skilled)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Operatives (Semi-skilled)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Laborers (Unskilled)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Service Workers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Previous Year Totals</b>	319	200	119	148	91	21	15	28	13	3	0	0	0
<b>Year Totals</b>	529	340	189	246	142	40	28	42	16	12	3	0	0

<sup>1</sup>Please note these are consolidated numbers for Birch and Ionex, as during the measurement period, the parent companies of these entities completed a merger.

## WORKFORCE DIVERSITY FORM

**Describe the specific initiatives, programs, and activities undertaken under the plan during the preceding year:**

During the measurement period, Birch Telecom of Texas Ltd., L.L.P. ("Birch") and Ionex Communications South, Inc. ("Ionex") (together, the "Companies") continued their Employee Referral Program. This program is for those instances where new hires were made.

The Companies are also expanding their membership with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Greater Dallas. The Companies continue to be active members of several chapters of the Chamber of Commerce throughout Texas.

The Companies partner with careerbuilders.com when advertising and recruiting for open positions. The careerbuilders solution delivers minority, disabled and ethnic communities through their network of diversity partners for consideration for open positions.

**Make an assessment of the success of each of the specific initiatives, programs, and activities listed above:**

During the measurement period, the Companies participated in Career and Job Fairs. These Fairs did bring in some candidates and some new hires.

The use of careerbuilder.com processes has proven to be somewhat effective in identifying candidates for open positions.

**Describe the initiatives, programs, and activities the utility will pursue during the next year to increase the diversity of its workforce:**

The Companies will continue to explore opportunities through websites on the Internet when identifying candidates. They plan to continue to participate in Job Fairs and will also look to expand their membership in the Greater Dallas Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

**State the specific progress made under the plan filed by the utility:**

The measurement period continued to reflect a difficult time in the telecommunications industry. During the measurement period, the parent companies of Birch and Ionex completed a merger. During this period, the total number of minority employees increased by 61. The diversity numbers for the measurement period improved in the state of Texas as a percentage of Texas-based employees.