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

Filed Pursuant to Substantive Rule §26.85

For the Period October 1, 2003, through September 30, 2004

on Behalf of

BIRCH TELECOM OF TEXAS LTD., L.L.P.

and

IONEX COMMUNICATIONS SOUTH, INC.

WORKFORCE AND SUPPLIER DIVERSITY FORM **WORKFORCE DIVERSITY**

NUMBER OF TEXAS FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES FOR REPORTING YEAR¹														
Occupational Categories	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	66	54	12	45	11	5	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0
Professionals	52	34	18	25	11	7	5	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Technicians	62	60	2	43	2	7	0	9	0	1	0	0	0	0
Sales Workers	285	199	86	142	64	30	9	22	10	5	3	0	0	0
Office and Clerical	67	17	50	8	31	5	12	1	6	3	1	0	0	0
Craft Workers (Skilled)	0	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	0
Laborers (Unskilled)	0	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	0
Previous Year Totals	529	340	189	246	142	40	28	42	16	12	3	0	0	0
This Year Totals	532	364	168	263	119	54	27	36	17	11	5	0	0	0

NOTE: Double-click on embedded Excel chart to open. Click on a cell or use arrow keys to select an occupational category and ethnic group to update workforce diversity numbers. Do not enter information in Combined Total and Company Totals columns or the This Year Totals row as these will update automatically. Cells left blank will be counted as zero. Click anywhere outside of chart to exit.

¹ Please note these are consolidated numbers for Birch and Ionex, as the parent companies of these entities completed a merger in 2003.

**WORKFORCE AND SUPPLIER DIVERSITY FORM
COMPANY INITIATIVES**

- (1) 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. During the measurement period, the Companies made adjustments to the Employee Referral Program and increased the awareness regarding the program to their own employees. In particular, the Companies also targeted specific positions of need and publicized the program to all employees.

**WORKFORCE AND SUPPLIER DIVERSITY FORM
COMPANY INITIATIVES**

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

During the measurement period, the Companies continued to participate in Career and Job Fairs. The continued use of on-line recruiting tools such as careerbuilder.com and monster.com proved to be effective in identifying candidates for open positions.

- (3) Describe the initiatives, programs, and activities the utility will pursue during the next year to increase the diversity of its workforce and contracting opportunities for small and historically underutilized businesses:**

The Companies will continue to explore opportunities through websites when identifying candidates for open positions. The Companies plan to continue to participate in Job and Career Fairs and maintain membership in Chamber of Commerce programs.

**WORKFORCE AND SUPPLIER DIVERSITY FORM
COMPANY INITIATIVES**

(4) State the specific progress made under the plan filed by the utility:

During the measurement period, the total number of minority employees increased by nine (9) when compared to the previous measurement period. The diversity numbers for the measurement period improved in the state of Texas as a percentage over the 2003 measurement period. African Americans and Asians both increased as a total during this measurement period.