



Control Number: 50664



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March 19, 2020

Filing Clerk
Public Utility Commission of Texas
1701 N Congress Ave
P.O. Box 13326
Austin, TX 78711-3326

RE: Project No. 50664 *Issues Related to the State of Disaster for Coronavirus Disease 2019*

To whom it may concern:

Wes-Tex Telephone Cooperative, Inc. and its subsidiary, Westex Telecom, have been tirelessly working to assess the most pressing issues arising from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). We have seen the issues change on an almost hourly basis since the beginning of this week. Our management team have strictly set our focus on employee safety, business continuity and community outreach. As early as February 28, 2020, we notified our employees of the need for constant hand cleaning/sanitizing; to refrain from shaking hands with others; to observe proper coughing/sneezing etiquette; to stay home with symptoms of acute respiratory illness resulting in fever greater than 100.4; and to stay home if exposed to family members with confirmed cases of COVID-19.

By March 16, 2020, our management team determined that it was prudent to close the business office to the general public to protect the safety of our office staff. Customers have access to information at our website at www.westex.coop, where they can view and pay their bills online. Customers can also find information on our website for paying their bills by phone. Customers can still reach our office by phone during regular business hours or through our call center after hours. We established a customer screening script to determine which customers were safe for on-site installations and repairs. For customers who appear to be a COVID-19 risk, we will make every effort to troubleshoot over the phone, work remotely through the central office or work up to the network interface on the outside of the customer premise. We also established a daily building disinfecting protocol and issued personal protective materials to all staff involved in public-facing service. On March 17, 2020, we initiated our pandemic plan and notified Shawn Hazard by email.

For community outreach we have begun opening free Wi-Fi access points at several of our central office buildings throughout our service area for the intent of serving furloughed school students with no internet access and have been notifying local school district superintendents as access points become available in their districts. We are awaiting board of director approval for signing the Keep America Connected Pledge, but are working within the spirit of that pledge until we can officially institute all the aspects of the FCC's pledge.

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We will continue to monitor releases from the Commission, the Governor's Office, the Texas Department of State Health Services, the FCC and the CDC until the health risk from COVID-19 diminishes and our employees and customers can safely conduct business in a normal manner. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (432) 756-3393.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darren Patrick". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Darren Patrick
General Manager