

Control Number: 50664

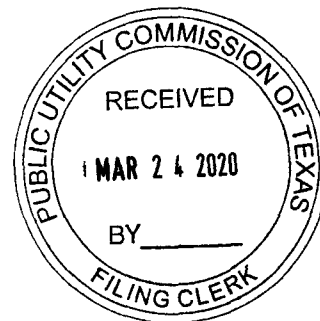


Item Number: 62

Addendum StartPage: 0

FIVE AREA TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE, INC.

P.O. BOX 448
MULESHOE, TEXAS 79347-0448
PHONE 806-272-5533 • 1-800-741-6925
FAX 806-272-5196



Public Utility Commission of Texas
1701 N. Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701

March 24, 2020

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

Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Inc., and its affiliates, collectively, West Plains Telecommunications, Inc. and Five Area Systems, LLC, files this letter to inform the Commission of our company's initiatives as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic. Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Inc. is a small rural telco providing service in the panhandle area of Texas. Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Inc. recognizes the unprecedented nature of this situation and greatly appreciates the State and Commission's efforts to monitor and provide guidance on the many issues that surround this pandemic.

As we are grateful for our health-care providers and the guidance of our federal, state and local leaders at this time, we are monitoring the situation closely and are providing assistance where possible. As such our company recognizes the importance of communications services during times such as these, and is doing everything we can to make sure Texans remain "connected" during these trying times.

The communications services provided by Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Inc. and other rural telecommunications providers allow for the social distancing that is being called for to flatten the curve of this Pandemic. We are working diligently to provide the services that allow for remote access for employees, remote learning opportunities, access to telemedicine and access to e-commerce and other vital communications enabled tools.

During this time, Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Inc., has taken the following steps to assist its customers and community:

- Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Inc. has initiated its Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)
- Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Inc. has signed onto the Federal Communication Commission ("FCC")'s "Keep American's Connected" pledge. As a part of this pledge, for the next 60 days:
 - Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Inc. will not terminate service to any residential or small business customers because of their inability to pay their bills due to the disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic;
 - Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Inc. will waive any late fees that any residential or small business customers incur because of their inability to pay their bills due to the disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic; and
 - Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Inc. will open its Wi-Fi hotspots to any American who needs them.

62

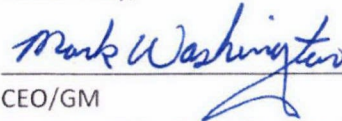
- In addition to items in the pledge Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Inc. has taken the following actions specifically within its community:
 - Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Inc. has closed our business offices to walk-in traffic.
 - Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Inc. has increased bandwidth to all of our customers at no charge.
 - Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Inc. has implemented a policy of designating one group of technicians to go inside customers' homes and businesses and a separate group to only work outside of customers' homes and businesses.
 - Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Inc. has implemented and tested work from home procedures if needed.
- While Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Inc. is working hard to maintain service, screening will be done before installation or trouble house calls. All technicians will be trained regarding the use of masks, sanitizers and wipes.

Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Inc. will continue to monitor developments in this emergency situation to assist our communities, state and nation. As well as our actions to maintain the critical communications network and services we provide, Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Inc. is contributing to the social distancing initiative by encouraging certain employees to work from home, limiting employee interactions with customers, encouraging online or drive through bill pay, and other recommended actions.

Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Inc. will continue to monitor developments and recommendations from the CDC, WHO, and other Federal and State entities. We are constantly communicating internally to adapt our plan to protect our employees, our customers, and maintain these critical services during this time.

Please contact us at 806-272-5533, 800-741-6925 or fivearea@fivearea.com should you have any questions or concerns.

Yours Truly,



CEO/GM

Five Area Telephone Cooperative, Inc.