

Lower Increase Predicted For Phone Customers

TARBORO — Because of an increase in in-state long distance revenues granted Friday by the state Utilities Commission, Carolina Telephone's need for additional local service revenues will be less than originally requested in its pending local service rate case.

"Our average customer got some really good news Friday when the Utilities Commission approved increases in rates for long distance calls to locations within North Carolina," said T. P. Williamson, Carolina Telephone's vice president-administration. "This means that our customers' bills for local service will not have to go up nearly as much as we have requested. Last week during hearings on our local rate request, we told the Commission that we needed \$1.4-million less than we had estimated last summer. Now, as a result of the long distance increase which is

effective right away, our needs will be further lowered by some \$7-million." In filing its local rate case last August, Carolina Telephone asked for increases totaling \$47.2-million and last week reduced this request to \$45.8-million based on higher revenues than had been anticipated when the rate case was initiated.

The state's 30 telephone companies will receive a total \$27.8-million increase in rates for long distance and other related services, as a result of the case filed by Southern Bell. The Commission's order granting the increase referred to the "large contribution" that long distance makes to local service, "thereby maintaining local service rates at a lower level than would otherwise be possible." The new long distance rates are expected to take effect by March 15.

Williamson concluded, "Carolina Telephone endorsed the long distance increases during hearings in December and we are pleased that the Commission has acted promptly and favorably on the statewide proposals."

"We've been advertising the fact that long distance revenues help hold down local rates. Now, our customers can see that fact

clearly demonstrated." The additional \$7-million in in-state long distance revenues means that Carolina Telephone's needs for additional local service revenues will fall to approximately \$38.7-million. The Public Staff, which represents consumers before the Utilities Commission, has recommended that Carolina Telephone's increases in local rates be

held to \$15.7-million. Hearing in Carolina Telephone's local service rate case before the Utilities Commission continues this week in Raleigh, and a decision is expected in April.

Carolina Telephone serves some 570,000 customers in 50 counties and has a construction budget of some \$100-million annually to maintain and improve its facilities.

Bush Seeking Industry Support

DALLAS, Tex. — Vice President George Bush today asked cotton industry leader's support of the President's economic recovery program, stressing the need for giving it time to work.

Speaking to the National Cotton Council's annual meeting here, he said reversing the 30-year trend of government growth will take longer than the four months the President's program has been in effect.

The vice president drew strong applause when he said the Administration is firmly committed to safety in the working place and health of workers, but is also committed to removing the excess of burdensome federal regulations on the cotton industry. He said

OSHA has just announced it has begun the rulemaking process to review the cotton dust standard and assured industry leaders the Administration will continue to work closely with them on the matter.

Bush said progress is being made on regulatory reform and that perhaps the most important accomplishment so far has been the changed attitude of regulators.

Regarding the farm situation, he cited the dairy program as an example of what happens when government tries to buy prosperity for an industry. Bush pointed to more than a billion and a half pounds of dairy products now in surplus in government warehouses.

As for the current situation, he said producers can help bring supply and demand into balance by participating in the voluntary acreage reduction program this year, but added that the long-term answer lies in expanding export markets.

"Rest assured the Department of Agriculture is going to continue working with your organization to find new markets for your products."

Ultimately, he added, the best relief for the American farmer will come in the form of a healthier national economy including lower inflation and lower interest rates.

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