



Telecom Order CRTC 2005-413

Ottawa, 20 December 2005

Saskatchewan Telecommunications

Reference: Tariff Notice 96

Withdrawal of Exchange Radio Telephone Service

1. The Commission received an application by Saskatchewan Telecommunications (SaskTel), dated 13 October 2005, proposing revisions to its General Tariff in order to withdraw Exchange Radio Telephone Service (ERTS).
2. SaskTel indicated that ERTS provides radio transmission of Multi Party Line (MPL) service to one customer with 3 ERTS units in Northern Saskatchewan. SaskTel noted that there have been no new activations onto the ERTS since May 2001.
3. SaskTel noted that the service was furnished through the Digital Operator Toll System (DOTS) technology. SaskTel submitted that the DOTS was extremely unreliable and that there was a substantial likelihood that the DOTS switch could not be repaired in the event of an outage. SaskTel indicated that the main means of repair remaining to the company was to simply reboot the DOTS switch as spare parts were no longer available. SaskTel noted that the DOTS equipment had been manufacturer discontinued, and that the vendor had ceased providing support for this technology in April 2003.
4. SaskTel noted that in April 2004, there were 15 ERTS units in service, which it had since reduced down to 3 units through generous offers made to migrate these customers to satellite service. SaskTel also noted that the remaining customer had informed the company that it would only disconnect its ERTS service when SaskTel ceases to provide ERTS service.
5. SaskTel indicated that Satellite Cell service monthly access and usage rates were comparable to the charges that apply for ERTS, and that the satellite service included such features as call forwarding, call waiting and voicemail, which were not available with ERTS.
6. SaskTel noted that on 13 October 2005, it had sent a notice to its one remaining ERTS customer. The notice set out the following information: the proposal to withdraw ERTS as of 12 January 2006; the rationale for the withdrawal of the service; the alternatives available; and the Commission's address should the customer have any questions or concerns.
7. No comments were received with respect to this application.

Commission's analysis and determination

8. In *New procedures for disposition of applications dealing with the destandardization and/or withdrawal of tariffed services*, Telecom Circular CRTC 2005-7, 30 May 2005 (Circular 2005-7), the Commission stated that, in assessing an application for destandardization and/or withdrawal of a tariffed service, it would examine whether the applicant had met the following criteria:
 - a. that there was a reasonable substitute for the service being destandardized and/or withdrawn;
 - b. that there was a clear transition plan including sufficient time to allow customers to make plans to replace the service in question; and
 - c. that affected customers were given adequate notice to enable them to participate meaningfully in the Commission's process.
9. In Circular 2005-7, the Commission stated that, in determining whether a reasonable substitute service existed, it would examine the following factors: functionality of the substitute service, availability of the substitute service in the same geographical area, and cost of the substitute service (including the initial outlay and ongoing costs to the customer).
10. The Commission considers that SaskTel has met the criteria set out in Circular 2005-7.
11. In light of the above, the Commission **approves** SaskTel's application. The revisions take effect as of 12 January 2006.

Secretary General

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