



Telecom Decision CRTC 2011-533

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Ottawa, 26 August 2011

Area code relief for area code 306 in Saskatchewan

File number: 8698-C12-201106790

In this decision, the Commission determines that area code relief for area code 306 is to be provided by implementing a distributed overlay using new area code 639, effective 25 May 2013.

Introduction

1. On 29 March 2011, the Canadian Numbering Administrator informed the Commission that the results of a general numbering resource utilization forecast indicated that area code 306 in Saskatchewan would exhaust by August 2013. In accordance with the criteria set out in the Canadian NPA¹ Relief Planning Guidelines, area code 306 was declared to be in jeopardy condition.²
2. The Commission subsequently issued Telecom Notice of Consultation 2011-260, in which it established a relief planning committee (RPC) to examine options and make recommendations for providing relief for area code 306 in Saskatchewan.
3. On 14 June 2011, the RPC submitted a Jeopardy Contingency Plan specific to area code 306, which was approved in Telecom Decision 2011-418.

The RPC's submission

4. The RPC filed a planning document and a relief implementation plan with the Commission, both dated 13 July 2011.
5. In the planning document, the RPC evaluated five relief options for area code 306. Based on its analysis of the various relief options, the RPC recommended that
 - a) area code relief be provided by a distributed overlay of a new area code on the area served by area code 306, with an effective date of 25 May 2013;
 - b) area code 639 be used for area code relief in the area served by area code 306;

¹ Numbering Plan Area

² A jeopardy condition is declared when the forecast and/or actual demand for central office codes exceeds the available supply of those codes before relief is implemented within certain time frames as set out in section 8.1 of the Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guidelines.

- c) the local dialing plan be changed to 10 digits for all local calls within area code 306 and from area code 306 to adjacent area codes 204/431 (Creighton, Saskatchewan to Flin Flon, Manitoba), 701 (North Portal, Saskatchewan to Portal, North Dakota), and 780/587 (Lloydminster and Marshall, Saskatchewan to Lloydminster, Alberta);
 - d) a 7- to 10-digit permissive dialing period be implemented beginning on 25 February 2013, with network announcements and automatic call completion for calls dialed using 7 digits being phased in between 25 February and 4 March 2013;
 - e) mandatory 10-digit local dialing be implemented beginning on 11 May 2013, with network announcements for calls dialed using 7 digits, stating that the caller must hang up and dial the area code with the 7-digit number, being phased in between 11 May and 18 May 2013;
 - f) the implementation of standard network announcements, stating that calls made using 7 digits cannot be completed as dialed, commence on 26 August 2013 and be completed by 26 September 2013; and
 - g) the proposed relief implementation plan be approved.
6. In a letter dated 25 July 2011, Saskatchewan Telecommunications (SaskTel) informed the Commission that in two remote exchanges in the area code 306 serving area, Kinoosao (central office code 758) and Uranium City (central office code 498), its switching equipment cannot currently support 10-digit local dialing. SaskTel requested that the Commission allow the Canadian Numbering Administrator to protect these locations from additional area code assignments until it has replaced this equipment, which it plans to do in 2015.
7. The Commission considers that the RPC's recommendations and SaskTel's letter raise the following issues:
- I. What relief method should be used and when should it be implemented?
 - II. Should the Commission approve SaskTel's request to keep 7-digit dialing in two of its remote locations?
 - III. Which area code should be used for relief?
 - IV. Should the Commission approve the relief implementation plan?
- I. What relief method should be used and when should it be implemented?**
8. The Commission notes that one of the benefits of area code relief by overlay is that it enables subscribers to retain their current telephone numbers when relief is provided.

The Commission considers that, in comparison with other relief options as evaluated by the RPC, such as geographic splits, an overlay is less disruptive to subscribers. The Commission also notes that this method would cost less to implement than other options evaluated by the RPC and would provide long-term relief.

9. Accordingly, the Commission determines that the area served by area code 306 is to be overlaid with a new area code, effective 25 May 2013.
10. The Commission notes that area code overlays require the use of 10-digit local dialing to ensure proper call routing between the overlaid area codes. The Commission further notes that consumers require a permissive dialing period during which calls are completed, regardless of whether they are dialed using 7 or 10 digits. During this period, when a consumer dials 7 digits to place a local call, the call is first directed to a standard short recorded announcement about the change to 10-digit local dialing before the call is automatically completed.
11. The Commission finds that the 7-digit local dialing plan that currently exists from area code 306 to adjacent area codes 204/431, 701, and 780/857, as described in paragraph 5 c) above, must be changed to 10-digit dialing for all local calls.
12. The Commission also finds that the 7-digit local dialing plan that currently exists from adjacent area codes 204/431 to area code 306 (Flin Flon, Manitoba to Creighton, Saskatchewan) must be changed to 10-digit dialing for all local calls.
13. With respect to the transition to 10-digit dialing for area code 306, the Commission determines that
 - the permissive dialing period is to take place between 25 February and 11 May 2013, with network announcements and automatic call completion for calls made using 7 digits being phased in during the period of 25 February to 4 March 2013;
 - mandatory 10-digit local dialing is to be implemented beginning on 11 May 2013, with network announcements for calls dialed using 7 digits, stating that the caller must hang up and dial the area code with the 7-digit number, being phased in between 11 May and 18 May 2013; and
 - standard network announcements stating that calls made using 7 digits cannot be completed as dialed are to be phased in between 26 August and 26 September 2013.

II. Should the Commission approve SaskTel's request to keep 7-digit dialing in two of its remote locations?

14. The Commission considers that temporarily retaining 7-digit dialing in the small remote communities of Kinoosao and Uranium City will not have a material impact on number utilization levels, and that SaskTel should be permitted to replace its switching equipment in accordance with its plans. The Commission therefore

requests that the Canadian Numbering Administrator protect the central office codes used in these two locations (758 and 498) until SaskTel replaces its equipment, which the company currently plans to do in 2015.

III. Which area code should be used for relief?

15. The Commission considers that it is a good assignment practice to use an area code that has not been used as a central office code within the area to be served, or in areas adjacent to it, because this reduces the potential for customer confusion during dialing. Since area code 639 meets this criterion, the Commission determines that area code 639 is to be used as the new overlay area code.

IV. Should the Commission approve the relief implementation plan?

16. The Commission notes that the relief implementation plan includes a detailed implementation activity schedule, a network implementation plan, and a consumer awareness plan. The Commission further notes that the recommendations and milestones included in the relief implementation plan are in accordance with the Commission's determinations in this decision.
17. Accordingly, the Commission **approves** the relief implementation plan with the changes discussed in paragraphs 12 and 14 above.

Secretary General

Related documents

- *Area code 306 Jeopardy Contingency Plan*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2011-418, 12 July 2011
- *Establishment of a CISC ad hoc committee for relief planning for area code 306 in Saskatchewan*, Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2011-260, 19 April 2011