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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
December 11, 2009

## **Arkansas Public Service Commission Approves Overlay Plan to be Implemented Within Existing 870 Area Code**

Decision allows existing customers to keep 870 Area Code by creating a 2<sup>nd</sup> area code within the existing 870 area; change will require 10-digit dialing for local calls.

**Little Rock-** The Arkansas Public Service Commission (Commission) has approved an overlay plan for the 870 Area Code which is projected to exhaust the 870 number supply in late 2013. By approving the overlay plan, existing customers will be able to keep their 870 numbers when a second area code is implemented within the existing 870 Area. Once this plan is implemented, local calls will require 10-digit dialing.

The implementation date for the new area code, as well as the new three-digit number, has not yet been determined. The exact date will depend upon how fast the available supply of unassigned 870 Area Code numbers is exhausted.

In its order, the Commission approved the overlay plan which was recommended by the Arkansas Telecommunications Industry, the General Staff of the Commission and the Arkansas Attorney General. In addition to approving the overlay plan, the Commission directed NeuStar and the Industry to develop a schedule for the deployment of the new area code based on a proposed 13 month implementation timeline. The Commission also directed all parties to reach consensus on when the implementation schedule should begin, to send multiple notices to customers to communicate the changes in dialing patterns as well as any impact these changes may have on a customers' service or equipment.

Before reaching its decision, the Commission conducted four Public Comment Meetings on the proposed plans for 870 Area Code on September 8, 2009 in Harrison, Arkansas, on September 17, 2009 in Jonesboro, Arkansas, on September 29, 2009 in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and on October 6, 2009 in Texarkana, Arkansas. The Commission also conducted an evidentiary hearing held on October 28, 2009 in Little Rock, Arkansas.

The Commission considered six (6) area code relief alternatives before approving the overlay plan. The other five (5) plans would have required existing 870 Area Code customers in certain regions of Arkansas to lose their current area code.

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