



RICA Board Members Visit FCC

March 16, 2006

As RICA continues its efforts to advocate the interests of small rural competitive service providers, Board members Gerry Anderson, Mid-Rivers Communications, Paul Schuetzler, Consolidated Telecom and Rick Vergin, CTC Telecom, met with the staff of the FCC Wireline Competition Bureau on March 13th. Accompanied by RICA General Counsel Dave Cosson, the group conducted a formal ex parte on RICA membership, Inter-carrier Compensation, Universal Service and the impact of current rules on rural CLEC's.

The group shared how RICA is a national organization representing facilities based competitive local exchange carriers from across the country that pursue an "edge out" strategy to provide superior services to subscribers. In addition the FCC staff was briefed on how current interconnection rules have allowed USF to offset reductions in NECA rates for incumbent ILEC's but fail to do so for rural CLEC's.

The RICA representatives shared how the present system of USF support fails to connect need for support and amount provided, thus portability rules should be eliminated in favor of CETC's receiving support based on their own costs. These and other current FCC rules effectively place rural CLEC's at a competitive disadvantage because they cannot set access rates based on their own costs, recover USF based on their own costs and have no rights to require CMRS carriers to negotiate interconnection agreements.

The full text of the ex parte can be accessed on the RICA website at www.rica-alliance.org under "filings". RICA will continue its ongoing dialogue with the FCC and Congress in order to help policy makers better understand the role of small rural competitive service providers in the provision of advanced telecommunications services across the country.

Should you have any questions concerning this notice, please feel free to contact:

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