



January 23, 2018

The Honorable Phil Berger, Senate President Pro Tempore  
The Honorable Tim Moore, House Speaker  
North Carolina General Assembly  
C/o Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental  
Operations Legislative Office Building  
Raleigh, NC 27603

*Filed via email*

Re: Saluda Mountain Telephone Company d/b/a RiverStreet Networks Annual  
Report to the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations

Dear President Berger and Speaker Moore:

On behalf of Saluda Mountain Telephone Company d/b/a RiverStreet Networks, this filing is being made to comply with a requirement found in North Carolina General Statute § 62-133.5(k).

If there are any questions, I can be reached at 336.973.6164.

Sincerely,

/s/ Tim Tribble  
Regulatory & Reporting Administrator  
RiverStreet Networks

Attachment

cc: North Carolina Utilities Commission (Docket No. P-76 Sub 53E)

*RiverStreet Networks*

1400 River Street  
Wilkesboro, NC 28697

[timtribble@wilkestmc.net](mailto:timtribble@wilkestmc.net)  
336.973.6164

**Saluda Mountain Telephone Company  
d/b/a  
RiverStreet Networks**

**Annual Report to the Joint Legislative Commission on  
Governmental Operations**

**January 23, 2018**

## **Saluda Mountain Telephone Company 2017 Annual Report to the General Assembly**

Saluda Mountain Telephone Company d/b/a RiverStreet Networks (Service) is an incumbent local exchange carrier (ILEC) that provides telecommunications services in its franchised area within Polk County and Henderson County, both of NC. Saluda Mountain is regulated by the North Carolina Utilities Commission (NCUC).

Saluda Mountain elected a form of deregulation as allowed by North Carolina General Statute § 62- 133.5(h) effective on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016. This filing is made in response to North Carolina General Statute § 62-133.5(k) which requires an annual report that includes the following:

*(1) An analysis of telecommunications competition by the local exchange company or competing local provider, including access line gain or loss and the impact on consumer choices from the date the local exchange company makes its election to be subject to alternative regulation under the terms of subsection (h) or (m) of this section.*

*(2) An analysis of service quality based on customer satisfaction studies from the date the local exchange company makes its election to be subject to alternative regulation under the terms of subsection (h) or (m) of this section.*

*(3) An analysis of the level of local exchange rates from the date the local exchange company makes its election to be subject to alternative regulation under the terms of subsection (h) or (m) of this section.*

### **Telecommunications Competition Analysis**

Competition in the telecommunications is strong across the state. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) publishes periodic reports on the status of voice telephone services. The most recent report was published in April 2017. “This report summarizes the information collected about telephone services as of June 30, 2016. It demonstrates continued growth in subscribership to interconnected VoIP and mobile telephone services and continued decline in subscribership to traditional wired telephone services.”<sup>1</sup> The FCC’s report states that 49% of wired telephone service in North Carolina is provided by competitors to ILECs.<sup>2</sup> The FCC’s report also states that there were 9,828,000 wireless connections in North Carolina compared to 3,628,000 wired connections (served by both ILECs and competitors).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Voice Telephone Services: Status as of June 30, 2016” Federal Communications Commission Industry Analysis and Technology Division Wireline Competition Bureau April 2017, at page 1.

<sup>2</sup> Id., at Table 1.

Saluda Mountain experienced competition and a decline in the number of access lines. Saluda Mountain started the year with 1165 access lines and ended the year with 1162 access lines. This was a loss of .3% of its access lines. Saluda Mountain's decline in access lines has been somewhat mitigated due to the success of a fiber network buildout in 2017.

### **Service Quality Analysis**

Saluda Mountain monitors how it is serving customers relative to the service quality objectives set forth in NCUC Rule R9-8. These objectives deal mainly with measuring the company's effectiveness in responding to customers, timeliness in delivery of service as well as timeliness in resolution of service affecting issues. During 2017, with only minor exceptions, Saluda Mountain consistently met or exceeded the objectives established by Rule R9-98. Based on company records there were no customer complaints filed with the NCUC during 2017.

### **Local Exchange Rate Analysis**

Prior to Service's election to operate under North Carolina General Statute § 62- 133.5(h) effective on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016, the company's local exchange rates were regulated under the NCUC's NC Price Regulation Plan. This plan allowed Saluda Mountain to adjust rates in accordance to a specific set of rules which governed percentage of increase, required Tariff filings, notification to the customer, etc. Allowable rate increases depended upon category of service, change in GDP-PI (Gross Domestic Product – Percent Increase), and overall resulting percentage change in revenue.

Since operating under Subsection (h) regulation, Saluda Mountain has not increased the rate for standalone basic residential local service which includes the entirety of 2017.