

**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA**

NEWS RELEASE

Thursday, July 14, 2011

Commissioners Cramer, Clark and Kalk

****For Immediate Release****

Phone 701-328-2400

Wireless phones reach half a million in North Dakota

More than 31,000 additional wireless phones were activated in North Dakota and close to 800,000 phones are being used throughout North Dakota.

It is estimated there are 506,755 wireless phones currently in use in North Dakota, an increase of 31,627 or more than six percent from 2010. Land line phones, which number approximately 287,670, decreased by 9,415 or a little more than three percent from 2010. The total number of all phones increased from 772,213 to 794,425 in 2011.

“This is great news for North Dakotans, we are well aware of our state’s energy boom but this is validation that our telecommunication sector continues to expand services to all North Dakotans. Those that are directly involved in the telecommunication industry deserve our thanks and gratitude,” said Commissioner Brian Kalk, who holds the Commission’s telecommunications portfolio.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) has limited jurisdiction over wireless companies. The PSC and the Federal Communication Commission have varying degrees of regulatory authority over portions of the telecommunications industry.

“The number of wireless phones continues to increase as more and more people consider them a convenient alternative to the traditional wireline phone,” said Commission Chairman Tony Clark, “The day has clearly passed where the wireless phone was viewed solely as a luxury item.”

The report also revealed some insights into the competition among wired telecommunications providers.

Competitive Local Exchange Carriers (CLECS) now serves 84,901 lines in the state, which is an increase of 2,101 from last year. Incumbent carriers now serve an estimated 202,769 lines, a decrease of 11,516 from last year’s total of 214,285.

“These numbers demonstrate the increasingly competitive nature of modern telecommunications services,” said Commissioner Kevin Cramer. “When technology is allowed and encouraged to develop within the marketplace, the need for government oversight is decreased and consumers are the big winners.”

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