

August 10, 2016

North Dakota Public Service Commission  
Attn: Patrick Fahn  
600 East Boulevard, Dept. 408  
Bismarck, ND 58505-0480

Dear Mr. Fahn:

Enclosed for filing in FCC Docket No. 10-90 is the annual certification filing, related exhibits, and an affidavit certifying that all federal high-cost support provided to Venture Communications Cooperative was used in the preceding calendar year and will be used in the coming calendar year only for the provision, maintenance, and upgrading of facilities and services for which the support is intended.

Sincerely,

VENTURE COMMUNICATIONS COOPERATIVE

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janelle Jessen".

Janelle Jessen  
Office Manager

**16** **PU-16-532** Filed: 8/10/2016 Pages: 11  
**Affidavit regarding certification of use of Federal  
Universal Service Support**

Venture Communications Cooperative

Janelle Jessen, Office Manager

BEFORE THE NORTH DAKOTA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION IN CASE NO. PU-439-01-460

AND BEFORE THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION IN WC DOCKET NO. 10-90

AFFIDAVIT OF VENTURE COMMUNICATIONS COOPERATIVE REGARDING  
CERTIFICATION OF USE OF FEDERAL UNIVERSAL SERVICE SUPPORT

State of North Dakota )

County of Sargent )ss.

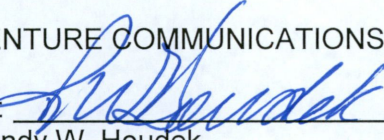
Randy W. Houdek, being first duly sworn on oath, does hereby declare and state upon affiant's own personal knowledge as follows:

1. Affiant is employed by Venture Communications Cooperative, (hereinafter, the "Company"), in the position of General manager/CEO.
2. The Company is an eligible telecommunications carrier within the meaning of Section 214(e) of the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 (hereinafter, the "Act"), and the Company is eligible to receive federal high-cost universal service support (hereinafter, the "Support") pursuant to Section 254(e) of the Act. The North Dakota Public Service Commission (hereinafter, the "NDPSC") has designated the Company as an eligible telecommunications carrier.
3. The Company serves 13 access lines within the boundaries of North Dakota and approximately 12,500 access lines within the boundaries of South Dakota.
4. Affiant is personally familiar with all of the Support received by the Company, and with how the Company uses all of Support that it receives.
5. The Company is filing this affidavit in compliance with the order of the Federal Communications Commission (hereinafter, "FCC") dated May 23, 2001 in WC Docket No. 10-90 (FCC 01-157) (hereinafter, the "Order"), as codified in 47 C.F.R. \* 54.314, which requires certification to the FCC that all federal Support will be used by carriers within each state only for the provision, maintenance, and upgrading of facilities and services for which the support is intended, as required by Section 254(e) of the Act and 47 C.F.R. \* 54.7. The Company is also filing this affidavit in compliance with the Order of the NDPSC dated August 28, 2001 in Case No. PU-439-01-460 and dated August 28, 2002, in Case No. PU-439-02-441. This affidavit is filed to facilitate the Company's receipt of federal Support for all four quarters of 2014, and for all quarters thereafter.
6. The Company hereby certifies that all federal high-cost support provided to Venture Communications was used in the preceding calendar year and will be used in the coming calendar year only for the provision, maintenance, and upgrading of facilities and services for which the Support is intended pursuant to and consistent with Section 254(e) of the Act and 47 C.F.R. \* 54.7. The Company will use the Support for the following services, as designated in 47 C.F.R. \* 54.101, throughout the Company's study area: (a) voice grade access to the public switched network or its functional equivalent; (b) minutes of use for local service at no additional charge; (c) dual-tone multi-frequency

signaling or its functional equivalent; (d) single-party service or its functional equivalent; (e) access to emergency services; (f) access to operator services; (g) access to interexchange service; (h) access to directory assistance; and (i) toll limitation services for qualifying low-income consumers.

Dated this 10th day of August, 2016.

VENTURE COMMUNICATIONS COOPERATIVE

By:   
Randy W. Houdek

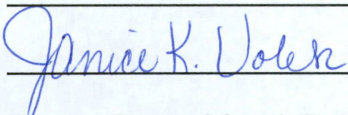
Its: General Manager/CEO

State of South Dakota )

) ss.

County of Hyde )

On this 10<sup>th</sup> day of August 2016, before me, a Notary Public in and for said County and State, personally appeared RANDY W. HOUDEK, known to me to be the General Manager/CEO for VENTURE COMMUNICATIONS COOPERATIVE, the corporation that is described in and that executed the within instrument, and acknowledged to me that such corporation executed the same.

, Notary Public

For the State of South Dakota

My commission expires: **MARCH 24, 2022**

## ANNUAL REPORT TO THE NORTH DAKOTA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

### ESSENTIAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER CERTIFICATION

The undersigned, on behalf of the telecommunications company named below (the Company), does hereby state and certify, as follows:

1. The Company will provide service on a timely basis to requesting customers within the Company's designated service area where the Company's network already passes the potential customer's premises, and

2. The Company will provide service, within a reasonable period of time, if the potential customer is within the Company's designated service area but outside the Company's existing network coverage, if service can be provided at a reasonable cost by:

- a. Modifying or replacing the requesting customer's equipment;
- b. Deploying a roof-mounted antenna or other equipment;
- c. Adjusting network or customer facilities; or
- d. Reselling services from another carrier's facilities to provide service.

3. The Company is able to remain functional in emergency situations and has a reasonable amount of back-up power to ensure functionality without an external power source, is able to reroute traffic around damaged facilities, and is capable of managing traffic spikes resulting from emergency situations.

4. The Company is satisfying and will satisfy applicable consumer protection and service quality standards.

5. If the Company is a non-incumbent local exchange carrier, it will offer a local usage plan comparable to the one offered by the incumbent local exchange carrier in the designated service area.

6. The Company acknowledges that the North Dakota Public Service Commission (the Commission) may require it to provide equal access to long distance carriers in the event that no other eligible telecommunications carrier is providing equal access within the proposed designated service area.

7. The Company has met and will meet the requirements of eligible telecommunications carrier advertising. This includes:

- a. A full description of available services in the Company's official telephone directory, including the process to be used by customers to qualify for lifeline and link-up service.
- b. Advertising of the availability of universal service in media of general circulation in the Company's designated service area. Availability may be advertised in newspapers, company newsletters, company or civic internet sites, bill stuffers, direct mailings, or other means intended to convey availability throughout the designated service area.

### **Exhibit A Information**

The following information is provided in Exhibit A attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference:

1. A description of the amount of high-cost universal service support received by the Company in the prior calendar year and a description of how that support was used for the provision, maintenance, or upgrading of the Company's facilities and services. (An explanation of any changes from reports previously provided to the Commission is also included.)

2. An estimate of the amount of federal high-cost universal service support the Company anticipates receiving in the following calendar year (the calendar year following this report) and a description of how that support is projected to be used for the provision, maintenance, or upgrading of the Company's facilities and services pursuant to Section 254 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

3. Exhibit A also contains, for the prior calendar year and the subsequent calendar year (the calendar year following this report), identification of specific construction or upgrade projects; a description of how service will be improved by each project; the start date and completion date for each improvement; the amount of investment for cash improvement; the specific geographic area where each improvement was made or will be made; and the estimated population that will be served by each improvement. (For an incumbent local exchange carrier (ILEC), this information is submitted at the study area level. For another eligible carrier, this information is submitted at the study area level of the ILEC. If a study area level or designated service area includes geographic areas in more than one state, the information is also submitted at the North Dakota level.)

4. Detailed information of any outage, as that term is defined in 47 C.F.R. § 4.5, of at least thirty (30) minutes in duration for each designated service area for any facilities the Company owns, operates, leases, or otherwise utilizes that potentially affect:

- a. At least ten percent (10%) of the end users served in a designated service area, or

- b. A 911 special facility, as defined in 47 C.F.R. § 4.5(e).

This report includes:

- a. The date and time of the onset of the outage,
- b. A brief description of the outage and its resolution,
- c. The particular services affected,
- d. The geographic areas affected by the outage,
- e. Steps taken to prevent a similar outage in the future, and
- f. The number of customers affected.

(If applicable, a copy of the FCC outage report that includes this information may be attached.)

5. The number of requests for service from potential customers within the designated service area that were unfilled during the past year. A detail of how the Company attempted to provide service to those potential customers is also included.

- 6. The number of complaints per thousand handsets or lines.



**EXHIBIT A**  
**Venture Communications Cooperative**

**Note: Venture Communications serves 13 access lines in North Britton, ND (701-443). The remainder of our service area is in SD. Venture is submitting information for the company as a whole. The Britton, SD and North Britton, ND exchange were rebuilt to provide broadband service and to improve the existing service using a fiber-in-the-loop technology in 2000.**

**1 & 2. Federal Universal Service Receipts:**

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2017</u>
High Cost Loop Support	\$3,241,438	\$3,100,000
Interstate Common Line Support	\$3,031,950	\$2,900,000
Connect America Fund Intercarrier	\$1,215,096	\$1,200,000
Safety Net Additive Support	\$ 0	\$ 0
Safety Valve Loop Cost Adjustment	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,488,484</b>	<b>\$7,200,000</b>

**We made 2015 expenditures and show estimates for 2017 expenditures for Provision, Maintenance, and Upgrading of Facilities and Services Supported By Federal Universal Service Funding as shown in the following chart:**

	<u>Actual</u> 2015	<u>Estimated</u> 2017
<b>Plant Specific Operations Expenses</b>		
Network support (Accts 6110-16)	\$ 0	\$ 0
General support (Accts 6120-24)	\$ 243,323	\$ 248,189
Central office (Accts 6210-6232)	\$ 1,246,493	\$ 1,271,423
Cable and wire facilities (Accts 6410-41)	\$ 1,717,733	\$ 1,752,088
Network operations (Accts 6530-35)	\$ 457,856	\$ 467,013
Depreciation and amortization (Accts 6560-65)	\$ 7,195,461	\$ 7,250,000
<b>Customer Operations Expenses</b>		
Customer services (Accts 6620-23)	\$ 1,082,587	\$ 1,104,239
<b>Corporate Operations Expenses</b>		
Executive and planning (Accts 6710-12)	\$ 702,107	\$ 716,149
General and administrative (Accts 6720-28)	<u>\$ 1,363,433</u>	<u>\$ 1,390,702</u>
<b>Total Years Supported Expenses, Before Return on Investment</b>	<b>\$14,008,993</b>	<b>\$14,199,803</b>
<b>Additions</b>		
Switching (Acct 2210)	\$ 345,040	<i>(See Exhibit B, Two-Year Plan)</i>
Cable and wire (Acct 2410)	<u>\$ 8,353,057</u>	
<b>Total</b>	<u>\$ 8,698,097</u>	
<b>Total Supported Expenditures, Before Return on Investment</b>	<u><u>\$22,707,090</u></u>	

3. Specific Construction and Upgrade Projects:

Wire Center	Description of Capital Improvement	Estimated Population Served by Improvement	Start Date	Completion Date	Estimated Capital Expenditures Each Year	
					2016	2017
Rosholt	Rebuilding town with a fiber-to-the-home technology	214	April 2016	Dec. 2016	\$788,600	
Langford	Rebuilding town with a fiber-to-the-home technology	152	April 2016	Dec. 2016	\$677,500	
Pierpont	Rebuilding town with a fiber-to-the-home technology	48	April 2016	Dec. 2016	\$314,760	
Hoven	Rebuilding town with a fiber-to-the-node technology	215	April 2016	Dec. 2016	\$870,880	
Blunt	Rebuilding town with a fiber-to-the-node technology	145	April 2017	Dec 2017		\$809,280
Harrold	Rebuilding town with a fiber-to-the-node technology	69	April 2017	Dec 2017		\$377,080
Wessington	Rebuilding town with a fiber-to-the-node technology	112	April 2017	Dec 2017		\$583,200

Hitchcock	Rebuilding town with a fiber-to-the-node technology	57	April 2017	Dec 2017		\$379,860
Tulare	Rebuilding town with a fiber-to-the-node technology	101	April 2017	Dec 2017		\$544,460

No capital improvements are planned in the following wire centers but nonetheless may be necessary in connection with the provision of service to new customers.

Wire Center
Bowdle, SD
East Onida, SD
Highmore, SD
Onida, SD
Onaka, SD
Lebanon, SD

Ree Heights, SD
Roscoe, SD
Seneca, SD
Tolstoy, SD
Britton, SD
Wessington Springs, SD
Gettysburg, SD
Sisseton, SD
Selby, SD
West Onida, SD

**4. Outage Information:**

During calendar year 2015, Venture Communications experienced no service outages lasting longer than 30 minutes and affecting at least 10 percent of its end-user customers. There were also no outages that affected a 911 special facility.

**5. Unfilled Service Requests:**

Venture Communications was able to provide service to all potential customers that requested service during 2015, and as of December 31, 2015, the Company had no unfilled requests for service.

**6. Complaint Information:**

During 2015, Venture Communications received no formal complaints from consumers. This equates to 0 complaints per thousand access lines. There were no complaints received by the Company more formally as written complaints or as complaints that needed to be resolved with the involvement of other Company representatives outside of the customer service department.